



T H E

R E C E S S ;

OR, A

TALE OF OTHER TIMES.

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O R, A

TALE OF OTHER TIMES.

BY THE AUTHOR

OF THE

CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

“ Are not these Woods
“ More free from peril than the envious Court?
“ Here feel we but the penalty of Adam
“ The seasons’ difference.”

The S E C O N D E D I T I O N,

V O L. I.

L O N D O N:
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T O

SIR JOHN ELIOT, BARONET.

S I R,

I Should but affront a heart which finds its first pleasure in obliging, by asking a formal permission to publish its merits, which alone could induce me to surprize you with this address. Time and distance may have erased the author from your memory, but neither can obliterate from hers the gratitude due to a gentleman, who uniting sympathy with science, and generosity with both, becomes to the suffering a subordinate providence. Indebted to your friendly endeavours till my heart is as cold as those even your skill could not save, I shall always remain,

S I R,

Your highly obliged,

B A T H.

Humble Servant,

SOPHIA LEE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

NOT being permitted to publish the means which enriched me with the manuscript from whence the following tale is extracted, its simplicity alone can authenticate it.—I make no apology for altering the language to that of the present age, since the obsolete style of the author would be frequently unintelligible.—A wonderful coincidence of events stamps the narration at least with probability, and the reign of Elizabeth was that of romance. If this Lady was not the child of fancy, her fate can hardly be paralleled; and the line of which she came has been marked by an eminent historian, as one distinguished alike by splendor and misery.

The characters interwoven in this story agree, in the outline, with history; and if love, or friendship, veil a fault, or irradiate a virtue, it is but reasonable to allow of a weakness all seek in some particular instance. As painting can only preserve the most striking characteristics of the form, history perpetuates only those of the soul; while too often the best and worst actions of princes proceed from partialities and prejudices, which live in their hearts, and are buried with them.

The

A D V E R T I S E M E N T

The depredations of time have left chasms in the story, which sometimes only heightens the pathos. An inviolable respect for truth would not permit me to attempt connecting these, even where they appeared faulty.

To the hearts of both sexes nature has enriched with sensibility, and experience with refinement, this tale is humbly offered; in the persuasion such will find it worthy their patronage.

T H E

T H E

R E C E S S, &c.

T O

ADELAIDE MARIE DE MONTMORENCI.

AFTER a long and painful journey through life, with a heart exhausted by afflictions, and eyes which can no longer supply tears to lament them, I turn my every thought toward that grave on the verge of which I hover. Oh! why then, too generous friend, require me to live over my misfortunes? Such has been the peculiarity of my fate, that though tortured with the possession and the loss of

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every

T H E R E C E S S , &c.

every tye and hope that exalts or endears humanity, let but this feeble frame be covered with the dust from which it sprung, and no trace of my ever having existed would remain, except in the wounded consciences of those who marked me out a solitary victim to the crimes of my progenitors: For surely I could never merit by my own the misery of living as I have done—of dying as I must do.

Alas! your partial affection demands a memorial which calls back to being all the sad images buried in my bosom, and opens anew every vein of my heart. Yet consummate misery has a moral use, and if ever these sheets reach the publick, let the repiner at little evils learn to be juster to his God and himself, by unavoidable comparison. But am I not assuming an insolent consequence in thus admonishing? Alas, it is the dear-bought privilege of the unfortunate to be tedious!

My life commenced with an incident so extraordinary as the following facts alone could incline any one to credit. As soon as capable of reflection, I found myself and

and a sister of my own age, in an apartment with a lady, and a maid older than herself.—Every day furnished us with whatever was necessary for subsistence or improvement, supplied as it seemed by some invisible hand; for I rarely missed either of the few who commonly surrounded me. This Recess could not be called a cave, because it was composed of various rooms; and the stones were obviously united by labor; yet every room was distinct, and divided from the rest by a vaulted passage with many stairs, while our light proceeded from small casements of painted glass, so infinitely above our reach that we could never seek a world beyond; and so dim, that the beams of the sun were almost a new object to us when we quitted this retirement. These remarks occurred as our minds unfolded; for at first we were content, through habit and ignorance, nor once bestowed a thought on surrounding objects. The lady I have mentioned called us her children, and caressed us both with parental fondness.—Blest with every gentle charm,

it is not wonderful she fully possessed the affections of those who had no one else to idolize. Every morning we met in a larger room than the rest, where a very venerable man performed mass, and concluded with a discourse calculated to endear retirement. From him we learnt there was a terrible large place called the world, where a few haughty individuals commanded miserable millions, whom a few artful ones made so; that Providence had graciously rescued us from both, nor could we ever be sufficiently grateful. Young hearts teem with unformed ideas, and are but too susceptible of elevated and enthusiastic impressions. Time gave this man insensibly an influence over us, as a superior being; to which his appearance greatly contributed. Imagine a tall and robust figure habited in black, and marked by a commanding austerity of manners.—His features bore the traces of many sorrows, and a kind of early old age, which interested every observer. The fire and nobility of his eye, the gracefulness

ness of his decay, and the heart-affecting solemnity of his voice,

*While on his reverend temples grew
The blossoms of the grave,*

gave an authority almost irresistible to Father Anthony, as we called him from hearing our mamma, to whom we understood he was brother. He usually partook our dinner, and from that time 'till the next morning vanished, for we knew not how or where he went. The interval we passed in little useful works, or in conversation with our mamma, whose only employment was that of forming our minds, for the world we were taught to dread.—*She* was our world, and all the tender affections, of which I have since proved my heart so full, centred in her, and my sister. Time and sorrow had given a wan delicacy to features exquisitely regular, while the soft symmetry of her person united to every common idea of beauty and elegance a feminine helplessness, which is, when unaffected, the most interesting of all charms. Her temper was equal, and her understanding enriched by a most ex-

ensive knowledge, to which she was every day adding by perpetual study. Inclined strongly by nature to serious reflection, and all her favorite employments, I used to pass those hours at her side. Ellinor devoted to her play things, or to Alice, whose memory was overcharged with those marvellous tales children always delight in. As our ideas every day expanded, we thought more and more concerning our origin, and our imprisonment. We knew Father Anthony constantly disappeared, but how or where was a secret beyond our comprehension; for in all our researches we had never found a door except those common to the family, and which shut us from the world. Ellinor, whose lively imagination readily imbibed the romantic and extravagant, conjectured we were in the power of some giant; nay, such was her disgust to Father Anthony, that she sometimes apprehended he was a magician, and would one day or other devour us. I had a very different idea; and fancied our retreat a hallowed circle to seclude us from the wicked, while Father Anthony was

was our guardian genius. Frequently we by agreement interrogated Alice, who though fond to the common degree of an old nurse of both, but more especially Ellen, resisted those little arts nature herself inspires. Our mamma we now and then ventured to sound, but her gravity always disconcerted us, and we retreated from a vain attempt.

She once absented herself fourteen days, and left us to our own conjectures, in a spot truly cheerless. Part of the time we spent in searching once more for a door, and the rest in childish lamentations for her loss; which Alice still assured us would be but a temporary one. Inflexible in the discharge of her duty, she still persisted in locking our apartment every day after dinner, at which time all who had occasion, doubtless, passed in and out of the Recess.

Being deprived of my customary resource, books, to amuse a part of our melancholy leisure, we mutually agreed to invent tales from the many whole-length pictures, which ornamented the best room,

and to take them as they came alternately. Ellinor readily invented a ludicrous story upon the portrait of an old man, which made us both laugh heartily. I turned my eyes to consider what I should say about the next; they rested on the figure of a man of noble mien; his dress I then knew no name for, but have since found to be armour; a page held his helmet, and his hair, of a pale brown, fell over his shoulders. He was surrounded with many emblems of martial merit, and his eyes, which seemed bent on me, were full of a tender sweetnes. A sentiment of veneration, mingled with surprising softnes, pierced my soul at once; my tongue faltered with a nameles idea, and I rested my head against the shoulder of my sister. That dear girl turned to me with quicknes, and the beam of her eye was like that of the picture. I surveyed her over and over, and found in every feature the strongest resemblance; when she frowned, she had all his dignity; when she smiled, all his sweetnes. An awe, I could not conquer, made me un-

able to form any tale on that subject, and I directed my attention towards the next. It represented a lady in the flower of youth, dreſt in mourning, and seeming in every feature to be marked by sorrow; a black veil half shaded a coronet she wept over. If the last picture awakened veneration, this seemed to call forth a thousand melting sensations; the tears rushed involuntarily into our eyes, and, clasping, we wept upon the bosoms of each other. "Ah! who can these be?" cried we both together. "Why do our hearts thus throb before inanimate canvas? surely every thing we behold is but part of one great mystery; when will the day come, destined to clear it up?" We walked arm in arm round, and moralized on every portrait, but none interested us like these; we were never weary of surveying or talking about them; a young heart is frequently engrossed by a favorite idea, amid all the glare of the great world; nor is it then wonderful ours were thus possessed when entombed alive in such a narrow boundary. I knew not why,
but

but we lived in the presence of these pictures as if they understood us, and blushed when we were guilty of the slightest folly.

The moment our mamma returned, we flew into her arms, and interrupted her tender caresses with importunate enquiries concerning these favorite pictures. She regarded us with astonishment---her eyes filled with tears, and she bade us leave her to recover herself alone. Shortly after she summoned Alice, and held with her a conversation which restored her tranquillity; but she carefully avoided our enquiries, endeavouring to diversify our hours by music, drawing, poetry, geography, and every ornamental branch of education. Whenever we verged toward an hint about the retreat --“ wait, my dear girls, she would say, the appointed hour---as, one may follow it, when you will wish yourselves still uninformed.”---Impressed with an undefinable melancholy, our years passed on 'till womanhood approached.

Pardon

Pardon me if I linger over these scenes; I have but few such to relate, and they are all of my life upon which my heart dares to pause. How are we born to invent our own miseries! We start forward from the goal of youth, fearless and impatient, nor know the heights and depths through which we must labor; oppressed in turn by every element, and often overwhelmed with that most insupportable of all burthens, our own dissatisfied souls. How have I wept the moment I quitted the Recess—a moment I then lived but in the hope of! To be always erring, is the weakness of humanity, and to be always repenting, its punishment.---Alas! could we learn wisdom without experience, mankind would perhaps be too happy.

Father Anthony in time ingratiated himself with us, by his continual remonstrances against our being shut up in a place which bounded our ideas so much that he despaired of making us comprehend half of what he taught us. We seconded his advice with endless entreaties. Our mamma, who was persuasion itself in her

own

own person, was not proof against it in that of another. “ Alas, my children, would she often say, by what fatality do you so passionately desire to leave a home you will hereafter remember with a pleasure full of regret ? In vain you would return to it---you will lose a taste for the tranquil enjoyments this solitude offers, without perhaps finding any to supply them. Yet far be the selfish weakness from my heart of punishing you, even for your welfare. You shall *see* this admired world. May it ever please you as it will at first sight !”

We embraced her with youthful transport, and then each other---“ We shall go at last, exclaimed both together, we shall see many more like ourselves !”

“ What say you, children ? cried she ; ah ! you will see few indeed like yourselves.”

The next day was appointed for our enfranchisement. We packed and unpacked our little luggage fifty times over for mere employment 'till the appointed hour came ; when we were summoned to the chamber

chamber of our only friend, who was walking about apparently agitated with a secret.

“ Are you grieved, mamma, cried I, that we are going to be happy ?”

“ Ah no, Matilda ! I am grieved, because I think you are just ceasing to be so. In this peaceful solitude I could supply to you every lost relation---the adopted children of my heart, I stood between you and a fate at once distinguished, obscure, and affecting.---Alas, why do you wrest yourselves and your secret from me ? Why do you oblige me to tell you, you must never more call me any thing but Mrs. Marlow ?”

“ Never more call you mamma ! sighed I, incoherently, who then are our parents ?”

“ You have no father : he who gave you existence sleeps in the bosom of God.”

“ Our mother——”

“ Lives---but not for you---enquire no farther ; let this specimen of knowledge teach you to fear it.---When the time requires it, I shall disclose your whole story ;

---weep

---weep no more, my lovely, my affecting girls; I have lost but a name; for my nature is unalterable. All who will see us know I never was married, which absolutely compelled me to this discovery. But I dare believe they will rely on my rectitude, and welcome you by whatever appellation I shall give you. Reasons you will hereafter know, induce me always to conceal a retreat, where alone I could have hid you, and both must, ere we leave it, solemnly promise never to disclose the secret."

Chilled with this solemn preparation, our desire of liberty vanished; we felt like links struck from the chain of creation; and still with restless imaginations explored the remainder of a mystery which we wept by anticipation. "She lives, but not for you!" were words whose sound vibrated to my heart, while pleasure danced around me, and the doubt attending the future, often robbed the present of enjoyment.

After we had made at her knees the final promise required, she muffled our faces,

faces, and taking my hand, as Alice did my sister's, led us through many cold passages for some minutes ; when unbinding our eyes, we found ourselves in a noble cloister. We flew into the garden it bordered, and how strong was the impression of the scene before us ! from the mansion, which stood on a hill, spread a rich and fertile valley, mingled with thickets, half seen or clustered hamlets, while through the living landscape flowed a clear river,

*and to the main
The liquid serpent drew his silver train.*

The sun was sinking, involved in swelling waves of gold and purple, upon whom we almost gazed ourselves blind : for though we had often read and heard of his effulgence, the author of universal being can alone display it. Imagination, Madam, may sometimes surpass the wonders of art, but those of nature leave all imagination far behind.

Mrs. Marlow led us through the Abbey, which might rather be called a palace : it
was

was erected upon the ruins of a Monastery destroyed at the Reformation, and still was called by the name of St. Vincent. It had all the Gothic magnificence and elegance, and we learnt with pleasure that Mrs. Marlow, the sister of its owner, Lord Scroope, was considered by every servant as its mistress. A noble apartment within her's was allotted for us; and the charms of the new world mingled with our melancholy reveries, alike destroying our repose. The rising of the sun, whose first beams gilt our windows, rouzed us entirely. Methinks, while I expatiate on these trifles, time seems suspended, and the scene still living before me. The rich dew-drops, those jewels with which nature decks her bosom, glittering to the rays that wandered over the grafts: the various animals that seemed to derive a daily existence from the return of that glorious orb: the morning hymn of the winged creation, all united to awaken our gratitude, and humble us before the author of our being, "Accept, oh God, would we cry spontaneously, the adoration

adoration of two hearts, who know no claim in this mighty universe but thee! oh deign to bless the desire of doing right with the power! and if sorrow only is our portion, sanctify it with resignation: so when time delivers us up to eternity, hope may be our conductor!"

We were delighted with a playful group of fawns and deer, with whom we longed to frolic, and stole through Mrs. Marlow's chamber into the park, by a passage she had pointed out to us the day before. What was our surprize when we saw those with whom we had in idea mingled, were large fierce creatures, and that had they not run from us, we must from them; that every bird feared its natural protector, and that man lived in continual warfare with every thing in creation, even to his own species!

I am tedious, and must have done with these puerilities, which yet on reflection yield the purest pleasures of our lives. Mrs. Marlow procured for us the best instructors in every art and science that remote residence afforded, and, by her own

example, gave that elegant finish to our manners, precept never can. Extremely detached, by our situation, from society, we easily discerned Mrs. Marlow was willing we should be so, for she frequently expressed anxiety at the thoughts of Lord Scroope's return; who, I understand, was sent ambassador to the Hague from Queen Elizabeth. Our masters, our servants, and the various rustics who tenanted the estate, met in the chapel of St. Vincent's Abbey once a week, and those were all our intercourse with society. On the evening of every Sunday we regularly went to the cell of Father Anthony, which was a cot raised by Lord Scroope (to whom he stood in the same relation as Mrs. Marlow) on the verge of a large wood which sheltered the mansion behind. Here, while we were indulged with all those simple repasts novelty gives charms to, our minds were enlarged by conversations on every thing sublime or instructive. If benevolence drew Mrs. Marlow abroad, she made us always her companions, and gave her alms but through our hands; ordering us

us ever to add some mite of our own, in proportion to our means. Avarice is rarely the vice of youth; at least, if I may judge by my own heart; for the chief joy of receiving, to me, was that of giving. Nor could Charity have descended to earth in a more lovely form, than that of Mrs. Marlow. At a tale of distress her eye assumed a melting benignity rarely seen, and never described; while her approach gave that pleasure to every sufferer, one should feel at the visible presence of a guardian angel.

Three years elapsed in this manner, ere Lord Scroope returned; and when he did, he was so deeply engaged in politics, that the various presents he continually sent from London, made to us the only difference.

Still the sad sound,---“your mother lives---but not for you!” rung through our hearts occasionally; still we equally desired to discover the Recess; and wandered through St Vincent’s Abbey with the same curiosity we once before did through that. The more we reflected, the

more we were convinced it must be near us ; but the respect we had for Mrs. Marlow's solemn injunctions, sealed our lips to every servant, and we never were allowed to ramble unattended.

Mrs. Marlow, endued with the purest principles, justly conceived happiness the noblest use of understanding ; and bent her whole attention towards convincing us, the state appointed us was the most desirable in the world. "Here, would she say, in a happy retirement, free alike from the drudgeries of high or low life, peace and innocence becalms your hearts, and blooms on your cheeks. Unenvying and unenvied as now, may that moment find you none-can av' id ! Ah, how unlike the vices and miseries of a court ! There you can have no vice so injurious to yourselves as sincerity ; no merit, like hypocrisy. Love and friendship are unknown, and their names made use of but to entrap the unwary. Women that have beauty are destroyed by it, and all who have not, are neglected. The gifts of man take place of the gifts of God, and money alone

alone constitutes merit.—Ah, never! never! my dear girls, can you enough bless that indulgent Providence, which withdraws you from it!"

Shall I confess my vanity? When I looked in the glass, I did not think I should be neglected, even at court. I had no opportunity of forming any just comparison indeed; for the rustics around us, scorched with toil, had only charms, enough left to shew what they might have been with care. The clearness of my complexion, and the delicacy of my features, left me no equal, but my sister: Nay, even our habits, though often only of a finer camblet than theirs, were made in so different a manner, that they did not appear to be composed of the same materials.

However disposed to profit by the advice of our more than parent, Heaven did not permit us to be happy. The clouds broke at once over our heads; Mrs. Marlow, our only tye on earth, and therefore doubly prized, was seized with a fever; the more dangerous, because it

was not violent enough at first to shew itself. To paint our distraction would be a vain attempt. Kneeling on each side her bed, for fourteen days and nights, we by tears and inward supplications persecuted the Almighty. Affectionately attached to us, she struggled for our sakes with the disorder, 'till having worn her down to a skeleton, it began at last to abate; but notwithstanding every effort of art, could never be eradicated. Scarce had we breathed after this distress, when an express from London delivered a pacquet to Mrs. Marlow, which occasioned her instantly to summon Father Anthony; they remained in consultation for some time, when they bade Alice order us instantly to join them.

“My children, said Mrs. Marlow, faintly, an unforeseen event obliges us once more to retire to the Recess. Every thing is at this moment preparing for our reception. You are now at years to judge of the importance of its concealment, nor will I longer make it a mystery.---But why thus afflict yourselves for a temporary restraint?

straint? If I am willing, for your sakes, to be carried thither, like a corpse into a tomb, surely you will not be so ungenerous as to vent one selfish lamentation?"

Effectually silenced by this noble reproof, we collected, in confusion and grief, our clothes and ornaments; when, returning to her room, we found there Father Anthony, an old domestick called James, Alice, and the Housekeeper; who, having dispersed the other servants, preceded us to a store-room on the ground floor, and opening a press, unfastened a false back, which conducted us into a closet, dark, but for our torches. She then lifted a part of the floor, fitted very neatly, and discovered a narrow pair of stairs, down which we went, leaving her behind, and effectually secured ourselves, by bolting it firmly on the inside. We past through several subterraneous passages built on arches, and preserved from damps by cavities which passed through every statue that ornamented the garden, 'till at last we reached our prison. But judge of

my astonishment, when I found the so often-sought entrance was a door of the size of that portrait which first gave me such singular sensations, and which I perceived was made to fall together, with a spring almost imperceptible.

Father Anthony silenced the exclamations I would have made, and drew me at once to Mrs. Marlow; who, pale and lifeless with the fatigue of this removal, gave additional terrors to the moment. Whether the agitation of her mind had increased her malady, or it was originally beyond cure, I know not; but saw, with speechless affliction, from the moment of our return to the Recess, she would never leave it alive. Enclosed in a spot without sufficient air, attendance, or advice, we saw her finish her generous attachment to us, by resolutely resisting our intreaties.

"Let us quit this dreary place, I would say, if but for a cottage. Let us not, in losing you, have the cruel aggravation of contributing to so great a misfortune.---

Oh !

Oh ! what more can we have to fear, than the loss of all we love?"

" Why, why, my children, returned she, thus embitter a common fate ? Can I, who have voluntarily passed my youth in a tomb, dread to bury my dust in it ? You know my opinion is singular, nor do I think man could avert the stroke when God recalls us, however wise or willing. If I had been taken earlier from you, indeed, heavy to all must have been the calamity ; but after having taught you to live, there remains this only lesson, and my duty is complete ; you now are enabled to judge for yourselves, confide in God, and he will not desert you."

" Alas ! would I cry, drowned in tears, from your eye alone have we learnt when we did any thing aright ; we shall no longer know good from evil when that dear eye is closed."

" Matilda, replied she with a solemn air, remember only when you are called to any important action, to consult your heart in solitude ; God has placed in that

heart

heart an unerring monitor, and if we hear not the small still voice, it is because we drown it in the noise of the world ; then shall we meet again to part no more ; then at the tribunal of the Most High, I shall gladly say, “ these treasures, O Lord, didst thou entrust to my hand unfullied, behold even so I restore them.”

Rising up as she pronounced these words, she held a hand of each of us to her heart, while her eyes streamed with a kind of glory when lifted toward her Creator. Never did I see such an animated figure ; her soul seemed that moment bursting from its beauteous mansion to join its sister angels.

“ Matilda and Ellinor, my more than children, you recollect, said she, I suppressed your curiosity once, by telling you, I would reveal your secret finally when the hour demanded it. That hour is come. Alas ! I cannot but weep to remember, that a thousand interesting ideas are now going to detach your affections from her who agonizes over you.”

We

We kissed her hand in speechless sorrow—

“ ’Tis true, continued she, my brother might hereafter disclose your story, but there are among its incidents, some that need the gentleness of a woman to teach you to bewail, without imitating. In this little history you will find the full motive of my retreat, and the means by which it was effected.

“ You already know I am sister to the present Lord Scroope, but you know not that I derived by birth from the ill-judged zeal of my mother. Bred up a Papist, she no sooner entertained a passion for Lord Scroope, than she formed a design to convert him to the Cotholick religion. She was handsome, as I have always heard, and he was young; he affected to be sensible of her efforts, which redoubled her zeal. She thought the love of Heaven alone actuated her heart, but he took advantage of those moments, and she found too late she had sacrificed her own soul’s welfare to his indulgence: her relations, who

who had the more encouraged her, as my father was a great match in point of fortune, exasperated at an error they ought rather to have charged themselves with, shut her up, and treated her with the utmost rigor.

“ In this terrible situation she was delivered of me ; her relations took me instantly from her sight ; they wrapt me in the most disgraceful habiliments, and sent me, with a letter full of the bitterest threats and taunts, to my father. Far, however, from feeling that indifference very young men usually behold their offspring with, he received me as the first gift of Heaven, and, committing me to the charge of proper people, made me of no less consequence than if I had been his legitimate daughter, and heiress of his estate.

“ In the mean time my mother was kept in total ignorance of the fate of her child ; miserable in her own heart, and eternally taunted for the disgrace she had brought on her family, she at length resolved to make her escape to Lord Scroope ;—she effected it, and found in his

his house the treasure of all her hopes, her child ; but as she was not of an age to be independent, on her being discovered by her kindred, she was again torn from his arms, and I was forever bereaved of a mother before I was sensible I had one. How often did my father repent his injustice to her ! it hung heavy on his soul in life, and was most terrible in death. In vain he sought her, for never from that hour did Heaven permit the erring pair to meet. A few years afterwards he married, and had by his wife the present Lord ; this circumstance, far from lessening his affection, endeared me still more to him ; he remembered I had no fortune but from his bounty, no claim but on his heart. His Lady having no more children, began to consider me as her daughter, and the misfortune of my birth was almost forgotten. In this situation I grew up, caressed by all his friends, and admired infinitely more than I deserved ; for, from the time my brother grew of an age to appear in the world, Lord Scroope had left St. Vincent's Abbey for the Court.

Many matches offered, of which my father often entreated me to chuse. I however saw no man with a preference; and as I was sensible my heart was too tender not to become partial, I wished to evade all proposals 'till then. I had in this interval the misfortune to lose my father, whose senses failing him in his last sickness, he had no power to make a necessary provision for me; yet in his delirium he raved of me and my mother continually. I felt this loss the less sensibly, as I was treated with the utmost generosity and tenderness by my brother and the dowager Lady Scroope; but I found my train of admirers diminish apace, when one appeared, who atoned in my eyes for the loss of a thousand. He was a young West-Indian, possessed of a considerable fortune, an amiable person, and an untainted heart. When I say I loved him, I speak but coldly; you will know how well hereafter. Mr. Colville, for that was his name, was of a character too much resembling the young Lord Scroope's, not to be favoured by him. He proved by

the

the generosity of his behaviour, the sincerity of his love; neither the misfortune of my birth, or want of riches, diminished his ardor; but rather, on the contrary, augmented it. His fortune was independent, and I was not delirous of more than a very moderate competence. The day of our marriage was fixed, and arrived equally wished by both. We were united in the presence of the Lord and Lady Scroope, who had loaded me with noble presents. Our hearts were gay, and a large company assembled on the occasion, invented a thousand diversions. I was sitting after dinner at the head of the table, singing, when a servant entered and whispered my husband; he rose up, and followed him into the next room; my eyes were industrious to find him, and as he left the door open, I perceived him, from an opposite pier glass, take a packet of letters from a man; he held them in his hand 'till I ceased singing, and then began reading: he continued to do so for some minutes, when I saw his hand shake with great violence, which soon diminishing,

minishing, he fell to the ground. I ran to him in the utmost agitation;— he was cold and convulsed. I took up the papers, but had not read half as far, before I was as insensible as himself.

(Mrs. Marlow was so affected at this passage, she had not power to proceed; at last recovering, she held up her hands, while her fine eyes were drowned in tears, and repeated)

“ Let me not, oh God, since I survived that moment, sink under the remembrance of it! I must cut short description, my children, on a circumstance which so nearly affects my heart. The letters were from his mother; after telling him she had suffered him to depart with the more ease for England, as she wished to have an opportunity of declaring a secret to him, shame had long suppressed, and which her decaying health forbid her longer to conceal, she related the incidents of her life; a few of which decided our fate, and convinced me the same parents gave birth to both. What a terrible discovery! I shall pass over those events

you

you already know, and only mention, that on being forced by her tyrannical relations from Lord Scroope's house, they sent her under the care of an uncle, in the Spanish service, to the West-Indies. During the passage, she found herself again with child; her kinsman, exasperated at this circumstance, used every means to prevail on her to marry Mr. Colville (a settler whose plantations joined his, and who was a passenger on board the same vessel) without acquainting him with her situation. Persecuted and distressed on all sides, she at last took a resolution on the first occasion, to declare all to her lover. His affiduity furnished her with one ere long, which she did not neglect. As soon as he had conquered his surprise, he assured her she should never repent her generous confidence in his honour, which affected him the more sensibly as his friend would meanly have deceived him. He owned himself so attached, that if she could give up fruitless hopes to partake his fortune, he would marry her directly, without claiming any right from the ceremony,

but that of releasing her from the tyranny of her kindred, and hereafter providing in the same manner for her child as he would for any of his own. Overcome with the severity of her treatment, from those who were bound to pity her, and sensible the stranger who could speak so generously on the subject, might make her as happy as she now durst hope to be, she requested time to deliberate on the proposal, which he granted. Some days elapsed, during which, she resolved to secure to herself the privilege of keeping *one* of her children, by consenting. They were united by a holy father then on board, who, at Mr. Colville's desire, gave out that he had married them two months before in London, but concealed it from some motives respecting the lady's friends. Her uncle, under whose care she was, not suspecting the eclaircissement, was astonished how she had brought her lover to consent to this; but, as his authority was at an end by her compliance with his wishes, he affected the utmost satisfaction, and offered them some valuable presents.

Mr

Mr. Colville, whose ingenuous heart abhorred his meanness, refused with contempt those poor compensations, for a deceit which might have proved so fatal to his happiness, nor left him to suppose he was ignorant of the favor intended him. He painted the infamy of the proceeding in the strongest colours, and on their arrival at Jamaica, carried his bride to his own plantation, without deigning to take leave of her relations. "Here, said the dear lady, I gave birth, my son, to you, and here I first learnt to be happy. The generous kindness with which Mr. Colville treated you, the unwearied attention he shewed to me, deserved, and obtained my whole heart. It seemed as if the sincerity of my conduct had cancelled its errors; I may truly say, I never saw him careſs you, without ardently wishing you had a claim to the name he bestowed on you. You grew up without my ever hearing of your real father, and as it little became me to wound the heart of my husband, I preserved an absolute silence on the ſubjeſt, nor ſeemed to re-

member such a person ever had existed. I will not say I never thought of him; nature taught you to recall him to my mind by a thousand artless gestures.—I gave you, after some years, two sisters and a brother, the loss of whom you doubtless remember. A generous, though silent struggle, continued during their lives, between Mr. Colville and myself; I always attempted to convince him you, though the elder, had not more than a just portion of my love; and he, no less anxiously, sought to satisfy me his own children had not made him forget what he had promised respecting you. Heaven, however, took them to itself, and Mr. Colville divided between you and me a fortune too dearly gained by his loss; though you have paid the tribute of filial gratitude over his grave, my son, remember that is insufficient; you owe him everything, and can never discharge the obligation. Your youth, and the pleasure Mr. Colville took in being called your father, made it very improper I should intrust to you a secret so humiliating to myself, and distressing

ressing to him ; yet, sensible of the necessity, I have, since his death, a thousand times resolved on it, and as constantly given up the design. At last, my dear child, you rendered it easier to me, by proposing to visit England, and I suffered you to go with less regret, because I hoped you there would find another parent ; one whose claim in you is the same with mine, and one, who I am assured, will proudly acknowledge you. Go then, my dear Anthony, to Lord Scroope ; shew him this letter : tell him, for I am not afraid to say it, even to yourself, I send him a son worthier of a nobler name than the weakness of your mother has given you. Tell him, I will not allow him to provide for your sister Gertrude, since the fortune I possess is already destined to her, if living. Do you, my dear Anthony, repair my loss to her, for never, in respect to my husband's memory, will I see again the father of my children ; this place shall be my grave, and here, while life remains, I will bless you both, and pray that

the sins of your parents may never be visited upon either.

“ Vain wish, said Mrs. Marlow ; the stroke was already given. Judge for me, my dear girls, what I felt on reading such tender sentiments, and remembering the characters were those of a mother !

“ We were removed to separate apartments ; Mr Colville, no longer my husband, had strength of constitution, but not strength of mind, to support this calamity ; he fell into a deep melancholy, and shut himself from all the world : as to me, Heaven, in mercy, took away my senses by a violent fever ; I remained in a dangerous situation several weeks, during which time he formed a resolution, my restoration gave him an opportunity to effect. Each wanting courage to see the other, he informed me, by letter, he only waited my consent to return to his own country, and dispose of his effects, the produce of which might endow the monastery where he should receive the holy habit. He conjured me to support a mis-

a misfortune, his letter convinced me, he was ready to sink under. The sad choice he had made was already mine ; I wrote to inform him of it ; I conjured him never to betray to our mother the fatal event of her concealment, but to persuade her we were both happy.—What a vain request ! had not Heaven deprived her of ever seeing him, how could he have concealed so exquisite a distress ?—A wound in the heart will ever bleed on the slightest touch.

“ I recovered my senses, but that disgust with which every disappointment (and how much more so deep a one !) overwhelms a young mind, made every thing odious to me ; the hours when I was so pleasingly deceived, were all I reckoned in my life. Before I left my room, my Lord’s marriage with the Lady Matilda Howard was concluded ; his union with the first Lady in England, both in birth and beauty, gave the greatest pleasure to all who loved him. Little able, and less disposed to assist at festivities, I retired on the plea of bad health to the Abbey

The death of the Dowager Lady Scroope, in the midst of the pleasures, entirely damped them. Lord Scroope conducted his new Lady into the country, to pass the time of mourning; the amiable engaging bride conceived a friendship for me, which, as is frequently the case in noble minds, had perhaps its source in my misfortunes. With all the graces that adorn grandeur, Lady Scroope had the sweet simplicity of a village maid; a heart full of the most exquisite delicacy and sensibility, and features which did justice to her mind. My Lord perfectly adored her, and her rank and charms soon made me find St. Vincent's Abbey no longer a retirement.

“ A letter came in a short time from my brother, which informed me, that on his arrival at Jamaica, he found my mother had died during his absence; this was accompanied with bills for a large sum, as my portion of her valuable legacy. There is something so tender in the name, the idea of a mother, although unknown, that in spite of my other afflictions, I found a very

a very sensible one in her loss. My heart had now no resting place. Before, the remembrance that the blow came from her, however unintentionally, gave me a little courage, which I was not sure I possessed till it was lost. There is a pleasure to hearts capable of refinement, in sacrificing something to the friends we love; the silence we endured to save her from distress had lessened mine, which now broke forth anew. The amiable Lady Scroope neglected nothing to soften it; she used every effort to prevent my retiring to the monastery, as I had purposed, and her influence over her Lord made her wishes too surely his for him to neglect adding his intreaties; the obligations I owed his family, the esteem I had for his Lady, and the very refinement I have mentioned, made me unable to refuse. I could never make too large amends for such kindness. My sister-in-law, who rather boasted than disowned the title, to gratify me, neglected the amusements natural to her years, and a mind at ease; it seemed as if I had the authority vested in her, and not

not her will, but mine, directed the family. Our guests departed by degrees, and Lady Scroope's brother, the young Duke of Norfolk, with some other relations, alone remained.

“ To satisfy my brother Anthony no le-
vity had erased from my mind the tender
ties which once united us, and which
neither time nor reason could ever entirely
dissolve, I laid before him the motives of
my conduct, and conjured him to be-
lieve, since I could never be his, I never
would be another's. Lady Scroope not
being able to prevail on me to return to
London, departed without me, after ex-
torting a promise, that I would think no
more of a nunnery. She had left the
Abbey three months, when she gave
birth to the present Lord, to the inexpress-
ible joy of her husband. To shew all the
gratitude in my power for the favours I
had received both from Lord Scroope and
his mother, I divided my fortune, and in-
sisted on their accepting half, as a present
to the young heir. The generous Matilda
would have returned it, but her Lord,
more

more sensible of the value of money, received the gift. She reproached me for it with that kind raillery which friends know how to make so agreeable ; she told me she should cease to love me, since the world would now call her attachment interested.

“In the time of her absence, I spent many hours in reviewing the ruins with which this place abounded ; the gloomy magnificence of those great remains of art, was more suited to my sadness of soul than the softer and more varied scenes of nature ; the liking I had conceived for these places, doubtless first caused the housekeeper to shew me the Recess. She had lived in the family a vast number of years, and knew the secret. How often had I walked through its ruined ailes, without suspecting it could possibly contain one habitable spot ! I will now, ‘my’ dear children, explain its situation and structure :—It was once inhabited by nuns of the order of St. Winifred, but deserted before the abolition

abolition of Convents, from its ruinous condition; in this situation it remained many years, shunned by the country people, and devoutly visited by those travellers whom chance or curiosity brought this way. When the Reformation, in the time of Henry, robbed the monks of their vast domains, the ancestor of Lord Scroope obtained this land of the king; he pulled down the monastery to erect a convenient mansion in the same taste, and discovered a secret passage from thence to the Convent; it was blocked up without being generally known, and the ruins left as an addition to the prospect; nor till chance gave the communication a value, was it remembered. The nobleman who could obtain so vast a favor, 'tis needless to mention, professed the reformed religion, but not able to forget that in which he had been brought up, his house became the asylum of many of the unrevenued fathers; this circumstance being noticed, he found his views in the world depended on his expelling them, when the secret passage occurred

curred to his remembrance. He had the stones removed cautiously by the holy fathers, and found the place well arched and paved, and free from damp; it terminated in a room they supposed to have been the refectory, and which still remained entire. They removed, by degrees, such accommodations as were necessary into it, and thither the refugees retired, being supplied with food from the Abbey: but finding themselves shut up in too small a place, and in total want of employment, they began working under ground, and by degrees formed two other passages from the Recess, one of which ends in the Hermit's cave, where the eldest of them lived, and the other in the midst of the ruins. Thus providing against discovery, or rather securing their escape if that should happen. In surveying the ruins, they found several places enclosed, and yet undemolished; from among those, they selected the few we have lived in, chusing them always separated to prevent suspicion. Thus, in a few years, each father had his own cell,

cell, and a monastery was hid among the ruins of the convent. At length, the severity of government abating, several of the monks ventured again into the world, and of the eight who made it their asylum, two only ended their days here. Lord Scroope, sensible of the value of such a retirement, carefully kept the secret when its inhabitants were gone; two servants alone knew it, and they were faithful; nor till the house-keeper told me the story, had I an idea of such a place.

“ This account appeared to me almost fabulous; the ruin was at least half a mile from the mansion, which then had a view of it rising plantations daily diminished, till the wood became frequented, or indeed passable only on the side near the Hermit’s cave: I impatiently desired to explore the whole romantic secret.

“ The house-keeper did not delay a moment to gratify my curiosity; she summoned an old servant who knew the way, with torches, to lead me through the windings. The arched roof which was,

by some contrivance in the building, kept astonishingly free from damps, echoed to our very feet. The gloominess of the scene accorded with my ideas, and suggested a scheme which I have since thought a providential one, to my mind. The division of the rooms, the bare walls, and holes in the roof for air, displeased me; but since my affection for Lord and Lady Scroope debarred me from devoting myself to a convent, I resolved to fit this place up, and retire to it whenever the owners, with their guests, made St. Vincent's Abbey too gay for me. Three times I visited it, and each time found my desire greater. I discoursed with the old man, who, from a considerable reward I offered him, agreed, with the assistance of his son, who was a builder, to render this a comfortable habitation. I was unwilling to admit a third person into the secret, but soon discovered his son James was already acquainted with it. They directly began lodging their implements in the cave, which was altered to give a face to the whole. Three months made it

it what it now is; charmed with a device which I little foresaw would be useful to my friends, the house-keeper and my maid Alice, brought, by my direction, every necessary to the dark room, from whence the men fetched them. The time of my Lord's return drew nigh, the place was aired, and my books and clothes already carried there; no sooner had I resigned the care of the family into the hands of my amiable sister, than I acquainted her with my intended retreat. Her surprise was extreme at seeing how commodious we had rendered so sequestered a spot; but being fearful, if she opposed my resolution, of seeming to constrain me, she suffered me to indulge my fancy. Hither then I retired, attended by Alice and James, the latter of whom lived in the cave to secure us from discovery, and furnish us every little convenience. This solitude, so suitable to the sadness of my soul, was inexpres-
sibly agreeable to me; it had all the advantages of a nunnery, without the tie
to

to continue in it; a restriction the most likely to make retirement odious. My brother Anthony (with whom I constantly corresponded) charmed with the description of a spot so well calculated for hearts wounded like his and mine, assured me, instead of shutting himself up in a convent, for which he felt he had no vocation, as soon as he thought he could bring himself to consider me only as a sister, he would fix his residence in the cave.

“ I had remained there two months, when a messenger arrived to recall Lord Scroope to Court; the cause could not remain a secret. Mary of Scotland, that beautiful and unfortunate Queen, who had been imprisoned by her subjects as an accessory to the murder of her husband, had found means to escape, and implore the protection of Elizabeth. The jealousy and hatred that princess had long entertained for one so superior in those endowments most admired by herself, made this step excusable in Mary, only

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from the cruelty of her situation. But did not that very situation entitle her to royal treatment? In Elizabeth many noble qualities are mingled with impatience, caprice, pride, and excessive vanity. Overjoyed at getting a rival into her hands, doubly formidable, instead of offering Mary a princely asylum, till, on the proof of her innocence, she should be restored to her crown, Elizabeth instantly made the Queen of Scots sensible of her power, by dropping those ardent expressions of friendship and esteem with which all her letters had before been filled (most probably to hide the very reverse) and insisting on her consenting to be tried by laws, with which she was unacquainted, and never yet subject to. It was to propose those harsh terms to Mary, the Queen had sent for Lord Scroope; she deputed him in concert with the duke of Norfolk, and several other Lords Commissioners, to receive from Mary her justification, and examine into the authenticity of the proofs.

“ The

"The deserted, nay, almost betrayed Queen of Scotland, too late found how little the professions of the great are to be relied on. She was now in a worse condition than if she had still remained in her own country, and submitted to laws by which she had governed. Compelled, by the severity of her fate, to bend to a woman but equal with herself; to give herself up a prisoner to a government she had never offended, and over which she was probably destined to reign, as a criminal, to attempt a justification before people too probably ordered to condemn her, and, even if they avoided that, too politic to clear her innocence, and restore her freedom: For the Queen of England had already placed a number of people around her, who watched all her steps so cautiously, that they wanted only the name to become a guard. Amid all these fears and mortifications, submission was Mary's only measure. She had learnt, young as she was, to submit with dignity, and demand a degree of generosity, by not seeming to ~~doubt of having~~ She therefore

fore received the Queen's decision with composure, delivered herself into Lord Scroope's hands, and agreed to defer appearing before her sister Elizabeth, 'till she could appear with honor.

" This great event engrossed the attention of all Europe. Various opinions were formed, and Elizabeth never found Mary more formidable than when in her power. All blamed her errors, but they pitied her youth, and imputed many of them to inexperience and faults in her education. Her uncommon beauty, affability, elegance of manners, and expression, were strongly commended by all who had seen her, and those who had not, listened to the tale with avidity, and reported it with increase. Every word in her praise was a dagger to the heart of Elizabeth, and the unfortunate Mary's greatest crimes with her, were the graces she received from nature.

" Lady Scroope had spent some of her early years in the French Court. Mary was too affable and amiable not to attach every one for whom she had an inclination,

tion, and the friendship she shewed for the Lady Matilda, would have made the separation the more afflicting, but that Mary, by the death of Francis the second, found herself no longer attached to France, and was obliged, with infinite regret, to quit the kingdom she had been educated in, to govern one filled with domestic jars, and almost ignorant of those softnesses which give charms to society ; and which, in a peculiar degree, adorned the court she had hitherto reigned over.

“ The troubles in which she had been plunged, from the hour she returned to Scotland, had hardly left her leisure to distinguish those formerly honored with her notice : Lady Scroope had, however, always preserved an attachment to her, less the fruit of gratitude than sympathy. The Queen’s present sad situation, of which she heard amply from her Lord, touched her to the very soul. She accused Elizabeth of meanness and injustice ; and, without doubting the innocence of Mary, she ardently desired to

lighten her captivity, and convince her that misfortune had not robbed her of every friend. These sentiments were too fervently generous not to engage me. I insensibly took part in what interested my sister so nearly, and learnt to deplore a Princess thus treated, whom, in a happier situation, I should doubtless have censured.

“Lord Scroope, to satisfy his wife, who entreated him to the step, represented to Elizabeth, the impropriety of leaving the Queen of Scots unaccompanied by any lady of distinction, and without the attendance, nothing could exempt the place she had chosen for an asylum, from paying her, whether guilty or innocent. To give force to this, he hinted the error of harsh measures, which interested the common people, and by engaging their pity, might weaken their fidelity.

“The last reason, weighed infinitely more with our Queen than the first, for her heart was more full of policy than feeling. She however appointed Lady Scroope to attend

attend upon Mary, and sent orders to treat her more suitably to her rank.

“Overjoyed at carrying her point, without appearing in it, Lady Scroope did not delay her journey; but unwilling to leave me, she used all her interest and influence to persuade me to accompany her. She represented, she did not wish to engage me in any gay scenes, the office she was allotted to being that most conformable to the melancholy turn of my mind. The inclination I had to see Mary joined with her, and I consented.

“Bolton Castle, whither Mary had been conducted by the Queen’s command, was a strong fortress on the borders of Yorkshire. Without furniture, or accommodations for a royal guest, it declared at once to that Princess, the melancholy captivity to which she was destined. The humanity of Lord Scroope in vain attempted to conceal the fate that awaited her; she gave herself up to an immoderate grief, which was augmented by the news of Bothwell’s death, who had taken refuge in Norway.

We were met at Derby by the Duke of Norfolk, whose ardent desire to see the Queen of Scots had induced him to join us. This nobleman was of an amiable presence, in the prime of life, full of a generous ardor, a captivating vivacity. Without an equal in rank in England, he had formed, long since, the design of espousing Mary, and Bothwell's death had renewed hopes her marriage with him had frustrated. I was amazed at the difference visible in the manners of the Duke; nor did I immediately perceive whence his impatience of any disappointment, and deep reveries could proceed; but the pleasure he took in hearing his sister's commendations of the Queen, the softness that sparkled in his eyes, while she related the events her letters to Bothwell had laid open, shewed me at length that ambition had raised a flame in his heart, he mistook for love.

" We arrived at Bolton, and Mary was not apprized, till Lady Scroope was introduced to her presence, that Elizabeth had sent her a friend so anxiously desirous

to lighten her captivity. I would describe the Queen of Scots to you, my dear children; had not nature drawn a truer picture of her than I can give. Look in the glass, Matilda, and you will see her perfect image.

I could not contain my astonishment—“ Oh Heavens! exclaimed I, is it possible in lamenting the fate of that injured Queen, I have wept for a mother !”

“ A short time will explain all, said Mrs. Marlow. The Queen was in the bloom of youth, and the sorrow which hung over her features, gave them an irresistible attraction. Her air of resigned dignity and feminine sweetneſs, was mingled with innocence and unconscious modesty. If I was inclined to pity her before, how greatly was that sentiment enlivened ! Her faults seemed to vanish, or to be atoned by her misfortunes. Nothing could be more interesting than her first interview with Lady Scroope, whose tears alone could express her sorrow and affection.

“ How

“ How must a scene, which distressed me, touch a heart prepared to love her ! The Duke found there was a passion stronger than ambition ; her crown no longer engrossed his thoughts, it was herself alone he desired ; he lamented the evils it had overwhelmed her with ; and from which, even her resignation of it, would not relieve her .” Love communicated all its delicacies at once to his heart ; and the man who had dared aspire to her, while in prosperity and peace, in this sad moment of humiliation had not presumption to lift his eyes to her, to speak of his affection, or insult her by his compassion.

“ Lady Scroope was too quick-sighted to overlook this change in her brother ; but far from drawing any ill presage from it, she flattered herself he was destined to restore the Queen, and to find in her gratitude and affection, a reward proportioned to his merit.

“ Willing to relieve the tediousness of the hours, that Lady devised amusements of which no one partook, though all, from a just

a just sense of the intention, appeared satisfied with them. The silence and melancholy of the Duke of Norfolk engaged the Queen; she found it a delicate compliment to her distress, and regarded him with an attention too flattering to be overlooked. Charmed with an esteem, which he had rather wished than hoped, the ardor of his soul found words, and Mary discovered, in attempting to attach a friend, she had gained a lover. Considering her interest only, she must have encouraged him; but, remembering how fatal her partiality might one day prove, she conjured him to subdue while yet in its infancy, a passion it would be cruelty to encourage; to remember her only as an unfortunate friend, and in that light, confessed herself obliged to him for his interest and power in her favor.

“ In the first wildness of love, nothing seems impossible; an answer so mild, only animated the hope it was meant to extinguish. He formed a thousand projects, he engaged his sister in his interest, and every

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every hour of his life was filled up by plans for the deliverance of the amiable Queen. But as it was impossible his residence should be a secret, and he justly feared awakening the attention of Elizabeth, before his schemes were ripe for execution, he engaged his sister to make a request, he wanted courage to mention ; since she might, with more propriety, represent to the queen, the policy of rendering her fate his.

“ In this dangerous conjuncture, the unfortunate Mary listened once more to the partial advice of her heart ; which prompted her to yield to so noble, so deserving a lover. She had caught his frenzy, and realized the fictions of his brain with the same facility. His vast estates, numerous vassals, and still more, his extended and noble connections, flattered her with the hope of amply rewarding him, and she thought it but generous to let the recompence rather precede the service than follow it.

“ Fatal delusion of a prejudiced mind ! Oh Mary, too tender Princess ! why were not

not all the past misfortunes of thy life, which had their source in love, monitors to thee? Why did they not teach thee to avoid this error, which heightened every affliction, and gave new pangs to a long, long captivity?

“ The Duke not daring to engage his brother-in-law in an action contrary to his commission, entrusted his intention only to his sister. Too ardent and too amiable an advocate to be denied, the Queen of Scots was persuaded by that Lady to unite herself with the Duke. They were married in the presence of the Lady Scroope and myself, Sir Arthur Forester, and the Duke’s two Secretaries.

“ Possessed in herself of all his wishes, the prison of the Queen became a palace to the Duke; and every hour seemed to add to a passion, which appeared at first incapable of addition. The authority Mary had given him over her, the tenderness with which she regarded him, were powerful arguments against the approaching separation; but Lady Scroope saw with concern, the extravagance of a passion she had encouraged.

raged. She knew too well the temper of Elizabeth, not to anticipate her resentment, if this step was discovered, and knew likewise his own safety would be a poor motive, for persuading her brother to leave Bolton ; she therefore represented to him, how ill he rewarded the lovely Queen of Scots, by lengthening an imprisonment it was his duty to curtail ; and asked him what expectation Mary might form from a husband, who already preferred his own indulgence, to her freedom, happiness, and glory ?

“ These reproaches were too true to offend the Duke. He lamented, but yielded to the cruel necessity. Mary, as if forewarned that these hours were all the easy ones remaining of her life, used every means to detain him ; but the generosity of her affection, awaking his more strongly, he bade adieu to the charming wife, he was never more to meet, and set out for London, to engage all his friends to favor a marriage, no one now could prevent. He flattered himself his interest

was so great, that the Queen would be reduced to consent, whether consonant to her inclination or not. Indeed, this was the only rational mode of proceeding; for to imagine Elizabeth weak enough to unite her rival and heiress, voluntarily, to the first of her subjects, would have been an unpardonable blindness.

“ Fortune, however, had destined otherwise, and only smiled awhile, to make her frown more terrible. All the great Lords of Elizabeth’s Court, who had seen, with regret, the imprisonment of Mary, entered with pleasure into Norfolk’s schemes. His letters were filled with the most flattering hopes, and the Queen, who was with child, gave him notice of it. This circumstance added to his joy; he promised, before the time of her delivery, she should have her prison gates opened by all the nobility of England. The Earls of Shrewsbury, Derby, Bedford, Northumberland, Westmoreland, Pembroke, Southampton, Arundel; and Sussex, had warmly engaged in his cause; and their names alone would influence many.

many. But the friend he most relied upon, was the Earl of Leicester, whose ascendancy over the Queen was well known; he had taken on himself the disclosure of the whole to Elizabeth, when that measure became necessary. In the mean time, Norfolk used every means to prevent the Regent of Scotland from accusing Mary to the Queen; nor was his artifice unsuccessful. Murray, after having entered England for no other purpose, suddenly returned, without taking any step in the business; a circumstance, which defeated all the measures of the English Court. But Elizabeth more strongly apprehending from this some plot to release Mary, removed her to Tutbury, and added the Earl of Shrewsbury to Lord Scroope, as her keepers.

“ My sister still followed her, nor could I desert her in such a situation. We had hoped, from the information of the Duke, to find the Earl of Shrewsbury inclined to favor her; but whether he foresaw the end of this unfortunate project, or had deceived Norfolk, he kept a strict watch over

over the Queen's actions, whose condition now confined her to her apartment.

" The Duke, flattered by Murray's retreat, commissioned some of his friends in Scotland, to sound that nobleman on the subject of his marriage ; they unwarily laid open more than he intended, and Murray, enraged at having been his dupe, sent notice of the plot to Elizabeth. She was on a visit to Lord Leicester, who was ill when the letter arrived ; and confiding to that favorite, the cause of her agitation, he sent, while the Queen was consulting with Cecil, to warn Norfolk to retreat, as Elizabeth seemed bent on committing him to the Tower. Thunderstruck at this unexpected discovery, the Duke set out, with precipitation, for his seat of Kenning-Hall ; but, reflecting on the road, that his flight was a stronger proof against him than the accusation of his enemies, he returned directly ; he was however met by some officers, sent in pursuit of him, and conducted to Birmingham.

“ His Secretary posted off to Ttubury with an account of all these proceedings. They sunk the deeper into the heart of the Queen, as she hoped, by this time, to have been at liberty. She was every hour in expectation of an event which must publish her marriage, or load her with infamy. In this hard trial, Lady Scroope suggested to her the only safe way of proceeding: which was, to convey her child, by means of the Duke’s Secretary, immediately after its birth, out of the Castle, and concealing the cause of her indisposition, wait a more favourable moment for avowing her marriage. This was the only plan to avoid injuring the Duke’s safety, or her own honour. To prepare every thing against the time, I took my leave of the Queen, as returning to St. Vincent’s Abbey; and retiring to a neighbouring hut hired on purpose, waited with my maid, to receive the infant she should bring into the world, which was to be carried to the Recess, and placed under my care, till the fate of its parents could be ascertained.

“ This

“ This sad moment was hastened by a sadder event:—Bothwell, who was supposed to be dead, found means to convey a letter to the Queen, assuring her the report was spread only to quiet the Scots, who otherwise would never have suffered him to rest; and that he waited in Denmark till the divisions of her kingdom should enable him to raise a powerful party, and attempt her deliverance. Mary, on the first sight of the well known hand, felt all the horrors of her fate; she fell into strong convulsions, which were succeeded by the pains of labor. She gave birth to two girls—for you, my dear children, are the fruit of this fatal marriage, who, scarce had been held to the bosom of a mother, before you were divided from it, I fear, for ever.

“ The faithful Secretary conveyed you with the tenderest caution to me. When he repeated this sad tale, oh! how my soul wept for the ill-fated Queen! I vowed ye should be mine, for ye were the children of misfortune, and never, never have I broke that vow; distress en-

deared me to you with a parental kindness, and fortune gave you to me to console me for all her severity. 'Tis you only have kept alive in my heart the softest impulses of nature. You were cherubs in your infancy, and grew up to chear my days, and embellish my solitude. Full of the great charge vested in my hands, I sought the earliest opportunity of quitting a dangerous place; I brought you safe to this spot, attended by Alice, after having you baptized Matilda, the elder (which you was by a few minutes) after Lady Scroope, and Ellinor after the Duke's mother.

.vii.

“ To return to the Queen of Scots.— She languished a long time between ill-health and despair; but the Duke found means to assure her that this misfortune should not long separate them. He applied now to the Pope to annul Mary's former marriage with Bothwell; the Pope hoping to find some great advantage in the projected union, seemed inclined to grant his request; but the conditions he imposed

posed were so hard, that the Duke, had no hope.

“ In the mean time, Elizabeth finding an effectual bar placed between Mary and Norfolk by Bothwell’s being yet alive, and having some hopes from the ill-health of the Queen of Scots, of seeing an end of her fears, after conveying her to Coventry, she released the Duke, at the intercession of his constant friend Lord Leicester. Sensible of the rashness of his former conduct, he resolved to avoid that fault, and made no attempt to see the Queen of Scots, employing himself in hunting and diversions at Kenning-Hall, till the spies of Elizabeth, persuaded he had laid aside his projects, gave up their employment. The Duke past from the seat of one friend to that of another, to appearance in search of amusement, but in reality to assure himself of their attachment ; and, as if, by accident, to visit St. Vincent’s Abbey, and embrace the daughters of his love. You were a twelvemonth old when I conducted the Duke in the night to this Recess. The captivity and sad situation

of his wife arose a thousand times more strongly to his mind when he beheld her children torn from her bosom as if the product of dishonour, and hid in solitude from every human eye; to see, and know he could not prevent this, pierced him to the very soul. He spent the night in viewing you, in recommending you to Heaven, in forming a thousand silent complaints against his destiny, and resolutions, which by shortening his life, perpetuated on you the evils he sought to remedy. But when the dawn of day compelled him to return to his apartment, he again took you both in his arms, and while the tears of paternal affection flowed gracefully down his cheeks, poured on you a thousand blessings; he then gave you to me, and while I was stilling Ellinor, he sat in a deep reverie, when suddenly starting from it, he came and stood by me, and taking my hand—

“I have yet hopes, my dear Mrs. Marlow, said he, of bringing these infants into life, as the daughters of the loveliest, the most amiable of sovereigns; till when, I commit

commit them to you, as the most sacred of all deposits. Teach them to enjoy an humble rank, and they will adorn a high one; keep them in total ignorance of their birth till able to know its inutility. But if Heaven never allows me to claim them,—if the misfortunes of their parents end but with their lives, act up to the sacred character with which I alike invest you and my sister. Never let them know the Court of Elizabeth, but innocently and happily let them die in the desert where they bloomed."

"Shades of the honoured Howard and the amiable Mary, I have fulfilled your injunctions," exclaimed Mrs. Marlow, (turning with an enthusiastic action to the pictures I have mentioned with so much respect) your words have been ever present to my memory, and my cares have not been useless."

"Alas, Madam, said we, dropping with an emotion of awe on our knees, are these lovely figures the portraits of our parents? Oh! my father, my tender unhappy father! shall we never see you? Were we never to

be held in your arms but while insensible of that blessing? and you, my dear mother, who brought us forth in bitterness and pain, shall we not spend our lives in softening yours, and shed our sorrows upon your grave?"

" You interrupt, and distress me, children, said Mrs. Marlow, let me finish my melancholy tale; you will, alas! have hours enough for complaint.

" The Duke departed the next day, and in a short time, Elizabeth having appointed the Lords Huntingdon and Hereford in the room of Lord Scroope, the Queen of Scots was deprived of her only comfort, by the departure of his Lady.

" The Duke, finding gentle attempts ineffectual, resolved on a measure he deemed infallible, and entered into a treaty with a trusty Spaniard named Ridolpho, to engage the Duke of Alva to assist him with ten thousand men, to be landed at Harwich, from whence they were to march to London, to intimidate Elizabeth. The Duke of Alva consented, and

and even the Pope at length ashamed of neutrality, took a share in Mary's deliverance. Every thing was prepared; Norfolk's friends in England only waited the signal to join him, when one of those trifling accidents which disconcert the wisest schemes, rendered this in a moment abortive.

" To foment the divisions in Scotland so much as to keep the Regent employed, and prevent him from interfering in the affair, the Duke sent many sums to be scattered among the Queen's friends, in that kingdom, at different times;—but now when the crisis approached, he had prepared a large bag of gold, which with a letter he unfortunately trusted to a man quite ignorant of the plot; the carrier, in putting it up, by some accident cut the bag, and the contents filling him with astonishment, he communicated this singular discovery to a servant of Lord Burleigh's, who was his brother; this man, through a hope of getting the gold between them, and supposing some mystery was hid in the letter, persuaded him to shew

shew it to his master ; the carrier consented, and Lord Burleigh easily perceiving the plot, though not its extent, communicated it to the Queen ; in consequence of which the Duke was arrested in his bed, and all his servants imprisoned.

“ This fatal stroke overturned every remaining hope ; betrayed by his servants, all the letters the Duke had written and received on the subject, most of which he had ordered to be burnt, were produced against him ; his very benevolence was construed into a crime, and some money he sent to the Countess of Northumberland, who was in exile and distress with her Lord, became an article in his impeachment. He was condemned, and heard his sentence with a fortitude which melted Lord Shrewsbury, who pronounced it, into tears.

“ Lady Scroope, distracted at her brother’s fate, fell at the feet of the Queen, and left nothing unsaid to move her ; but all she could obtain was the deferring his execution, for Burleigh had so strongly prepossessed

prepossessed Elizabeth with the idea that the Duke sought her life, that although no circumstances arose to confirm it on his trial, nothing could banish it from her mind.

“ But what was the situation of the Queen of Scotland at this completion of her misfortunes ! An exile from her own country, a prisoner in another, a wife without a right to that name, and a mother, while a stranger to her children ; her fate was wound up in the condemnation of her husband ; and she had the poignant affliction of knowing she had raised the axe against him, which all her tears could not avert. Pierced with despair, she conjured the Lady Scroope to assure the Queen he would not only voluntarily consent to remain her prisoner for life, but would give up her claim to the Crown of England, if her sister (as she was compelled to stile her) would free the Duke of Norfolk, and restore him to his honors. This proposal Elizabeth received as a finesse, from which she only saw how deeply

deeply Mary's heart was linked with his. Even the all-prevailing Leicester's eloquence failed; self-preservation was an unconquerable principle in the soul of Elizabeth.

“The Duke was beheaded fourteen years ago, when you, my dear children, who were bought with his life, were not above two years and a half old. He died as he had lived, with dignity and honour.

“Never was nobleman more lamented: he had endeared himself to the body of the people by his courage, generosity, and affability; and to his equals, by an unconsciousness of superiority, which prevented envy, and an uniformity of conduct, which gained admiration. He was the first victim to the Queen's fears, nor could she have chosen one whose merits were stronger proofs of the value she set on herself.

“Lady Scroope detesting too late the artifices of the Court, and sunk in affliction for the loss of a brother she adored, retired
hither

hither with her Lord, who had thrown up his employments. Her body partook of the debility of her mind, and soon gave symptoms of a decay, which reduced her to the grave.

“ Her temper too was quite changed. This Recess, which so lately appeared a horrible dungeon, now seemed to her, as to me, a calm retirement from the odious forms and cares of life. She spent many days (and would every one, had it not afflicted her Lord) in weeping over you; in tracing in Matilda the mildly-beautiful features of her friend, and in Ellinor, the captivating graces of her brother. ’Tis to her you owe these valuable pictures.

“ Estranged from all society, the Queen of Scots gave herself up to the blackest despair, she had, alas! no hope to soften her captivity, no bosom to receive her tears; with Norfolk died all prospect of release, and at the same time all desire of it; what was the universe to her without he embellished it? Would it not have augmented her affliction to have enjoyed a so-

a sovereignty she durst never hope to share with him?

“ Elizabeth, whose fears were always awake from this moment, cut her daily off from some comfort or convenience; frequently changed her keepers and prison; and by her severity, taught the captive Queen that hatred may be stronger even than love.

“ Lady Scroope survived her brother but a twelvemonth, and left no inheritor of her virtues. She recommended you both in the most fervent manner to her Lord, who solemnly swore to make a provision for you suitable to his fortune, though not your birth.

“ Some years past away, when Lord Scroope, whose grief was at an end, finding himself tired of the inactivity of a country life, accepted some overtures the Queen made to recall him. He left to me the charge of St. Vincent’s Abbey; which he has not inhabited since.

“ Hurried on by other events, I have hitherto neglected to mention the return of

“ my

my brother Anthony, in three years after I brought you here. He fixed his residence in the hermit's cell, devoting his time to the study of physic, and the care of exhorting the poor, except at those hours you have seen him in; for his life and mine have been uniform.

"I have only two circumstances more to mention; one of which is more afflicting to me, than I once believed, aught respecting money, could ever be. Lord Scroope, who has been abroad some years in a public character, has become the object of the crafty Burleigh's hatred, or suspicion, and is now confined; while his estates and wealth are seized by the Queen, who knows so well the value of money, that it is too probable my Lord will never be able to fulfil the promise made to his wife in your favor.

The other is, that during several past years, I have not been able to hold any intelligence with the Queen of Scotland, who sent me some letters during the first years of her imprisonment, which, with those she wrote to the Duke, I have preserved,

served, with various other testimonials of your birth. Time may enable her yet to give you the splendor to which you were born; for Elizabeth is now stricken in years, and Mary more worn by sorrow than age. Wait then, my dear children, with patience, when I am in my grave, the destination of providence, and never claim your parent till she pleases to acknowledge you. No virtue is more acceptable to God than patience. To bestow happiness, is only in his power; to deserve it, ever in our own. Oh! if my prayers are heard! if my wishes ascend to the throne of the Most High, he will lead you through this world in peace; he will unite you again to my bosom, in a better!"

Here our generous protectress, our more than mother, ended, clasping us to her heart with an ardor that evinced the sincerity of her words.

But what new ideas; what amazing feelings did her narration give birth to! The impulses of nature taught us to treasure every word she uttered; for what in

the history of our parents could be indifferent? Never did our solitude appear so amiable—"the Court of Elizabeth!"—Oh my lamented father, could the sole inflictor of all thy evils, ever, ever attach thy children! Could she who oppressed her equal, and a Queen, innocent at least in all that respected her, only because she was in her power, be capable of alluring two hearts, untainted by that courtly politeness, which sanctifies the errors of a sovereign, and terms her very vices noble weaknesses?

But then, to learn I had a mother yet alive; to believe I might one day be received to her arms, only endeared by misfortune; full of this melting, this heart-expanding idea, I would have sought her prison; I would have been the companion of it: happy, if all my cares could make her forget for one moment, the rigour of her fortune; or call to her remembrance, amidst all her complaints, against the injustice of the world, that it still contained two beings

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who were willing to return for her the life she gave.

My duty to Mrs. Marlow alone divided my heart: should I desert her, who had neglected every thing for us? What! are the ties of nature to cancel, in one moment, those of inclination, gratitude, and esteem? Oh, no! I owed, it is true, my being to another; but she to whom I owed the best part of that being, the formation of my mind, the instilling those sentiments which alone make us valuable to ourselves and society, had a claim beyond all others, which nothing but death could dissolve. That awful moment was drawing nigh; every one that passed, stole something from the mortal part of Mrs. Marlow. Oh thou amiable saint! thou woman after God's own heart! can I remember the time when thou wert called from us, without floods of unavailing tears? Never—never—selfish as they are, they will flow, even though so often exhausted.

She

She delivered us a casket, which contained the papers she mentioned, and divers attestations, signed by herself, and the late Lady Scroope, and filled with all the ornaments of her youth. Then, after recommending us tenderly to Father Anthony,¹⁴ she joined in prayer with him, and all her little family; and in the midst, expired.

Oh, Madam, how strange, how terrible to me, was that moment! I saw Death first seize on one dearer than myself: the mansion in which we lived, now became a solitude indeed—a silence—how solemn! prevailed. In the first flow of a rational grief, how vast a vacuum is left in the heart! to hear no longer the voice which led us through life: to see the eyes, whence ours drew fortitude, close, never more to open: the whole frame assume that awful pallidness, every moment increases, and which brings so melancholy a memento to the breast! These touching ideas cannot always arise, for some losses destroy the power of reflection and complaint.

To attempt interring the dust of Mrs. Marlow in the chapel, must have awakened the suspicions of the Queen's officers. The secret of our retirement was in the breast of only three domesticks, and it was highly necessary to keep it concealed. On this account, a grave was made for her in Father Anthony's cell, whither we conveyed her, wrapt in white, and crowned with the fading produce of this world, in imitation of that ever-blooming wreath promised hereafter to all, who persevere in virtue.

Grief makes the most violent impression in youth; but, happily, it is the most transient: a little time abated the acuteness of ours; nevertheless, our solitude being deprived of its ornament, appeared uniform, melancholy, and disgusting. We gradually lost our assiduity in our works, when we no longer promised ourselves the great reward of her praise. Father Anthony, who was never a favourite with us, became every day more unpleasant.

Mrs.

Mrs. Marlow had always preserved a sway over him, which softened the severity of his manners: that being now at an 'end,' and his temper still more hurt by his affliction for her loss, he appeared a gloomy tyrant; and the additional carefulness with which he observed us, laid an odious restraint on all our expressions, and made our meals wear an air of sullenness each party was unconscious of causing.

" Obliged to hide in our hearts all the little follies and wishes we had been used to reveal to Mrs. Marlow without fear, we conversed with the Father only upon moral and indifferent topics; thus every day was the same, and each of course more tedious, when Ellinor suggested a scheme which promised some amusement. This was to explore the passage leading to the ruins, where we might at least breathe the fresh air, and, for one hour, have the pleasure of a little novelty. I readily came into the proposal, having had a curiosity to emerge from the moment I heard that passage first mentioned. It

was the full height of summer, and we pitched upon a long afternoon, when we had no fear of being sought for.

The passage was narrower, closer, and damper than the others, but very short. We took a torch that we might find the way of opening it. When we drew near the mouth, I observed some little holes, made doubtless to give the concealed person an advantage. I made Ellinor keep back while I examined the place, but saw nothing, however, to awaken any apprehension; a long avenue of broken arches, intermingled with brambles and wild wall-flowers, in the paths of which the grass grew very high, was all I could discern—nothing could more fully prove the unfrequentedness of the spot. We therefore examined the fastening immediately, and found it a small square door with two hinges on the top, and fastened across the bottom by a large bar of iron laid on strong hooks. I was unable to open it alone; Ellinor therefore extinguished the light to assist me; but with all our curiosity and courage, the sight of the pile of ruins threw us into an universal

trepidation. On turning round, to observe how the entrance was hid, we perceived a high raised tomb, at each corner of which stood a gigantic statue of a man in armour; as if to guard it, two of whom were now headless. Some famous knight, as appeared by his numerous ensigns, lay on the tomb. The meagre skeleton had struck an arrow through his shield into his heart; his eyes were turned to the cross which St. Winifred held before him. Nothing could be better contrived than this entrance, for however rude the sculpture, the ornamental parts took the eye from the body of the tomb. The little door, which dropt after us, was one stone, lined with wood, and so neatly fitted, that even when unfastened, it was not to be discerned. For a long way beyond, the prospect was wild and awful to excess; sometimes vast heaps of stones were fallen from the building, among which, trees and bushes had sprung up, and half involved the dropping pillars. Tall fragments of it sometimes remained, which

seemed to sway about with every blast, and from whose mouldering top hung clusters and spires of ivy. In other parts, ruined cloisters yet lent a refuge from the weather, and sullenly shut out the day ; while long echoes wandered through the whole at the touch of the lightest foot ; the intricacies of the wood beyond, added to the magnificence of art the variety of nature. We quitted, with regret, our new empire, when the sun left his last rays on the tops of the trees.

We resolved to conceal our ramble, lest Father Anthony should forbid us to repeat it. Those, Madam, who would maintain a lasting sway over young people, must, by softening the distance of age, steal into their confidence. Love and respect are united, but if fear once closes the avenues to the heart, no other sentiment ever overcomes it; obedience is then never led by inclination, and we rejoice to escape from haughtiness or austerity, however venerable the form they assume.

From

From what trifles spring the purest pleasures of life! a prospect, a flower, a song, can dilate the heart, while the passions are yet hid in it, nor have poisoned its simplicity, and curtailed its enjoyments.

Concealed pleasures are allowed to be the greatest; nor can any remark be more just; to deceive the watchful, reflects a compliment on our own sagacity, which renders us insensible to the error.

Almost every day did we visit this darling spot, always, like young birds, venturing one step further; and so often had we ventured without seeing a human being, that, at last, we ceased to fear. On one side the wood shelved down for a considerable way, beyond which the road was cut, and mingled with hamlets that gave a promise of society, which the rusticity of their inhabitants would not allow them to fulfil.

But you reproach me with losing time in uninteresting descriptions.—Ah, Madam! this wood was not always a desert. Chance, or, rather I should say,

Provi-

Providence, led into its solitary windings, the man, of all Elizabeth's Court, the most distinguished and admired; the man to whom nature had been prodigal of every advantage, which art and application had polished to the highest perfection.

One day, in calling my sister, I discovered in the hollow of the wood and building, a very fine echo; delighted with this, I began singing; the notes dying distinctly away, formed a melancholy symphony, when I was interrupted by Ellinor, who quitting some birds that flew tamely to be fed by her hand, ran towards the Reefs with great speed, waving to me to follow her. We had so often alarmed each other without any cause, that I hardly moved, when a noise I heard among the trees (which grew extremely thick on that spot) alarmed me. A voice, that sunk at once from my ear to my heart, conjured me in the most earnest manner to stop. Notwithstanding the necessity I found for flying, my eyes longed to claim acquaintance with the features

features to which that voice belonged, and my head, by an involuntary motion, was turned over my shoulder. The gentleman had now made a way through the shrubs which impeded his passage, and I found it impossible to retreat but by discovering a secret it was highly my interest to conceal. Perhaps I was not sorry to have an excuse to my own heart for a rashness it was too sensible of. The irresolution of my attitude, which was that of a person ready every moment to run, made him approach with profound submission and respect; but finding me attempt to fly, though almost without knowing it, he instantly stopt.

“ By whatever chance, said he, nature has hid in this sequestered spot her fairest productions, permit me, ladies, to derive an advantage from it. Believe me, you see a man who needs too much your compassion and assistance to venture to insult you, were such a thought capable of intruding into a heart never yet inhuman. Let me conjure you, then, to judge of my intentions by your own, and allow me,

me, if you know of an asylum (and are not, like me, driven here by some present distress) to shelter myself from assassins too well prepared to take my life, for courage to preserve it."

The person of him who pronounced these words, made their effect indelible. He appeared something past the bloom of life, but his beauty was rather fixed than faded ; of a noble height and perfect symmetry, he would have had an air too majestic, but that the sweetness of his eyes and voice tempered the dignity of his mien. His complexion was of a clear and polished brown ; his eyes large, dark, and brilliant ; his hair gracefully marked the turn of all his features, and his dress was of a clove-coloured velvet, mingled with white fattin and silver ; a crimson sash inwoven with gold, hung from his shoulder with a picture ; and the order of the garter, as well as a foreign one, with which he was invested, shewed his rank not less distinguished than his person.

Afto-

Astonishment—anxiety—a thousand rapid ideas melting into each other, and, defying language, confused and silenced me; when Ellinor, more mistress of her own judgment, took upon her to answer, by directing him to Father Anthony's cell, assuring him at the same moment, that this was all we could do to serve him.—“Ah, Ellen! cried I, passionately seizing her hand, he then must return and be murdered!” Struck with the vehemence of my own words, my eyes sunk to the ground, and changeable blushes covered my features, which redoubled when the stranger took my hand, with a grace all his own, and bowing on it.

“To your generous intention, Madam, I shall at least be a debtor—this is not a time or place for deliberation—fly, I beseech you, while you are yet able; the villains who pursue me, may not respect your youth, your beauty, or your innocence, and nothing could so greatly add to my misfortune as the involving you in it. If heaven lengthens my days, I may, perhaps,

perhaps, be able to convince you, him you wished to save is not unworthy your concern ; if, on the contrary, this proves my last, I have only to request you will deliver this (untying and giving me the picture) to the Queen, who will not fail to distinguish the bearer.

How, how did every word penetrate my heart—Ah ! how rapid is the progress of passion, and how, in one moment, does it quicken, nay, double every sense and sensibility ! I could, with the same ease, have exposed my own bosom to the assassins as his. Fear surmounted every prudential consideration, and I was only going to use the caution of enquiring who he was, when the sound of voices, not far distant, put that out of my head. Retaining, in mine, the hand which had hitherto held it, I led him through the most solitary arches to the foot of the tomb ; but our astonishment at sight of him, bore no comparison with his, when he found this to be our habitation. The time not admitting any explanation, he assisted us to enter, and followed himself ; when leaving

Ellinor to watch the approach of those we had heard, I conducted him into the large room of the Recess. With an impatient gratitude, he fell at my feet to thank me for my anxiety, but instantly starting back, he threw me into such a trepidation, that I sunk into a seat without power to look behind me, imagining either that the murderers, or at least, Father Anthony, must be at hand.; when looking around him, and at me by turns, he exclaimed,

“ Merciful heaven! by what strange ordination of thine do I find, in this desart, two dead portraits of my unhappy friend, and the Queen of Scots, and two breathing ones more lovely than even themselves?

Imagine my distress at this speech. I saw, in one moment, the whole of a secret preserved with such caution for so many years, committed to a stranger by an indiscretion, which still I could not condemn in myself. Fluctuating with all the irresolution of youth, I now knew not whether I ought to deny the truth or wha

what he had averred, or repose, in turn, a confidence in his honour; but the time I had spent in deliberating convinced him; for my confusion was an affirmative nothing could overcome.

“ You are silent, Madam, cried he, but your eloquent eyes imply a doubt it is my duty to clear. Oh! if I was capable of wronging your confidence, or betraying any secret you wish concealed, heaven would have abandoned me to the fate from which its fairest daughters saved me. Look but at that picture, and you will find an indubitable evidence of my sincerity.”

It was the picture of Elizabeth, given by herself to Robert Dudley, as the inscription informed me.

“ Ah! have I then, returned I, been the happy means of discharging the debt long owing to Lord Leicester?”

“ How, how have I been so fortunate, returned he, as to distinguish myself to you?—If I durst believe, and yet it must be so—for how should a less lovely mother give being to such children, and how, otherwise,

otherwise, should such matchless beauty and elegance be hid in a desert? Tell me, I conjure you, Madam, whether my past friendship with the Duke of Norfolk, does not intitle me to yours?"

" It does, indeed, my Lord, cried I, (bursting into tears at the name of my father) to my eternal gratitude. Your frank avowal sets me above all dissimulation; I dare own to you, that you have guessed my birth most truly.

" But, why then were you buried in this solitude? Why not acknowledged in France?"—

" Ah, my Lord! might I not, with much more reason demand, how the favorite of Elizabeth came unattended and alone to seek, in these woods, an asylum from assassins?"

" I will reply to you with candor, Madam, added he, and thus bespeak your confidence. The favor of a sovereign may easily make us great, but many circumstances must concur to make us happy; and when you hear some events of my life, I dare promise myself your compassion."

Ellinor, having executed her commission, rejoined us at this moment. I will frankly confess I wished her absence, and had imposed a task on her I could never have executed. The presence of Lord Leicester had awakened in my mind a thousand hopes and wishes unknown before. Not recollecting the improbability of his passing so many years without forming tender attachments, almost unconsciously I aspired to his heart ; and my apprehension of Ellinor's superior charms, had made me meanly cheat her of an opportunity of making a first impression : by submitting to my injustice she rendered me sensible of it in the most generous manner, and the care I then took to display her merit, induced my Lord to imagine I regarded him with indifference. Thus I reaped a double advantage from my return to rectitude.

My sister informed us, she had seen four men examining every part of the ruins : assured Lord Leicester must be hid among them, as one had picked up his hat (which he doubtless dropt when he addressed

adressed me) and swearing never to quit the wood till they had found him, they separated to pursue the search.

I turned pale at this terrible intelligence, which made his departure impossible; but as we every moment expected Father Anthony, who might have a share in the alarm the assassins would occasion, we agreed to hide my Lord in Mrs. Marlow's chamber, which had been hitherto deserted, and a place where none but ourselves would seek him.

It was now evening, and as the age and infirmities of our maid rendered her rather an incumbrance than relief, we set before Lord Leicester a repast, perhaps more adapted to his health than his appetite, but all our Retreat at that time afforded; and, withdrawing, left him that we might be ready if our guardian should visit us.

As I would not have you imagine, however we were indebted to nature, the surprise Lord Leicester expressed, sprung only from our beauty, I must observe to you, we drest to the taste of Mrs. Marlow, rather

than that of any country ; and those habits which covered happy hearts, preserve a long superiority in the fancy. Close jackets and coats, of pale grey, were trimmed round the skirts and sleeves with black bugle fringe ; the collars were thrown back from the throat and chest with point lace, and tied at the bosom with black tassels ; our hair, which was very thick, covered our necks and foreheads, falling in rings from under cambrick coifs ; small beaver hats, with high crowns, and waving black feathers, completed our appearance, at once too rustic and too elegant not to strike every person. Simplicity is the perfection of dress, and Ellinor presents herself in that I have described, more beautiful than when adorned with all the gaudy trappings pride and luxury has invented. She had an arch, a smiling eye, which, while it indicated observation, teemed with good nature ; a complexion perfectly fair, and delicately heightened by a bloom which came from the heart, as its changeableness implied ; a graceful stature, and a manner which

won

won almost every one to love her half as well as I did. But I need not expatiate on my Ellen's character; though dormant at present, it will soon demand your compassion in the hardest trials of life.

Love, Madam, is the parent of art. When we left Lord Leicester, without declaring my own sentiments concerning him, I sought to penetrate into my sister's, for that constant error of a first passion had infected me, and I fancied the man who had subdued my heart, might those of all my sex; every glance increases a fear so exquisite; I thought constantly I read in her eyes ideas afflictingly similar to my own; yet the lively sense she expressed at our indiscretion, which she easily conceived would put us in the power of Elizabeth's favorite, made me very doubtful; for although the same apprehension occurred to me, the confidence I already had in his honour, and the strong anxiety I felt for his life, made it a faint and distant alarm.

This night I first found my rest disturbed by the reflections of my mind. I hoped one moment every thing. I flattered myself the simplicity of my education, and the purity of my heart, would, by a contrast with those of the court, atone for the want of that polish a court alone can give; the obscurity of my birth, I found too sensibly a misfortune, and withdrawing my compassion for the first time from my parents, bestowed it on myself. Yet again would I say, can he despise the daughter of his friend? Will he destine me to suffer for an indiscretion in which I had no share! Oh! let me judge his heart by my own, which already feels the sovereignty of the universe would be too little for happiness, if he was not to partake it.

The calm rest of my sister set my heart at ease respecting her; I told every moment as it passed, anxiously expecting that in which Lord Leicester was to begin his narration. I had exhausted the few misfortunes my imagination had treasured, without

out being able to find any which could, in so well-governed a country, reduce a man of his distinction to flight; but how, untainted with the vices of the world, could I guess at the real one?

Without acquainting Lord Leicester, who had the conduct of our education, we made him sensible we had reasons for concealing him from every person: he had too much politeness to press for an explanation, and we were compelled to leave him alone till the departure of Father Anthony should give us an opportunity to listen to his history.

The Father, always slow and deliberate, seemed this day to have gained an addition to those qualities; instead of retiring after dinner, as usual, he began a long discourse (from a momentary impatience I had discovered through some trifling occasion) on the subduing our passions, every word of which augmented mine, and the less we seemed sensible of his argument, the more he became inclined to prolixity, till my impatience having arisen

to the greatest height, allayed of itself; and I learnt, nothing but acquiescing in all he advanced, could put a period to the tedious conversation. This finesse succeeded; he departed, and without staying a moment longer than was necessary to ascertain that circumstance, we released the Earl, and conducted him to our great room, as we called it.

Lord Leicester did not delay to gratify our curiosity, but began his story thus: (for to prevent the coldness a relater always gives to events, and as almost the very words are familiar to my memory, whenever a narration occurs, I, in justice to the person concerned, shall give him the power of speaking for himself.)

“ Sprung from a family too distinguished to be unknown to you, ladies, I might pass over the early part of my life in silence, did not one circumstance in it account for the honours and favours my royal mistress has delighted to shower upon me. The last of five sons, I was too young to be sensible of the loss when my unhappy

unhappy family were sacrificed to their own ambition and episcopal tyranny. Without any fortune, and obnoxious to those who had trembled at the very name of Northumberland, no happier fate had awaited me from the persecutions of Mary's reign (a time which will fill the latest with horror) had not the Earl of Arundel generously screened me from her rage. He had me conducted from a seat of my father's, bestowed on him by the Queen, to Hubert Hall, a noble one of his own, where I was educated with his children, without being known to the world. The kindness of this nobleman well deserves commemoration, since to the compassion awakened by my youth and helpless state, nothing was added but a grateful remembrance of a small favour the Lord Guildford had shewn him, at a time when his religion was more feared, though less punished, than ours then was. Sensible of all his generosity, I neglected nothing to prove my gratitude; and habit giving me the same advantage in his affection with

with his own children, he seemed to take pleasure in numbering me among them, and proposed to unite me to one of his daughters, who had from her infancy entertained a partiality for me. Fate was against him; for of the four lovely children he had when I was added to the number, I saw him without one, before I was fifteen. These losses, far from souring his temper, only softened it; he bent himself more intently on establishing me in all his fortunes, and was not without hopes of obtaining the reversion of his title for me. Miss Lineric, the daughter of his sister, and the heiress of a large fortune, besides what she might hope from him, was the lady he made choice of for me; and the agreement was formed with her father and guardians, without my knowledge; nor did I venture to refuse my consent, when it was demanded; although I had never seen the lady, and found my heart utterly repugnant to a match in which it had no share.

" The princess Elizabeth (whose noble endurance of an unjust imprisonment, will reflect eternal honour on her prudence) was, during the life of her sister, kept in close captivity; various Lords, as various fears obliged them to change, had the charge of her; the Earl of Arundel was for a short time entrusted with the important office, and thus was I early introduced to the knowledge of that pious lady. Far from extending the prejudices she might justly have imbibed against my family to myself, she was pleased to honour me with her notice; to take amusement in polishing my manners and accomplishing my mind. Brought up a Catholic, it was to her I owed the enlightening of my understanding, and the discretion to conceal a difference of opinion from my benefactor, which might have alienated, and perhaps broken his heart.

" My attachment to her was as great as her own goodness; I longed, with the ardour of youth, to signalize myself in her service; nor was it long before an occasion offered. The Earl of Devonshire,

shire, actuated, either by love or ambition, flattered himself that the Princess's captivity would make her gladly embrace a proposal of marriage: he engaged many noblemen who favoured the Protestant religion in the scheme, and he imagined nothing was necessary towards obtaining her consent but her knowledge of the design. To effect this, he disguised himself as a gardener, and worked several days in the hope of seeing Elizabeth, but in vain; for the Queen's orders were so strict, that she was allowed for exercise only a long gallery with latticed windows, which joined to her apartment. The awkwardness of the Earl in his new employment, of which I was fond, and consequently a competent judge, caught my attention; I spoke to him, and the involuntary tremor, caused by a fear of detection, strengthened my suspicion; he eluded my questions with too much exactness, to be what he affected; and this I mentioned casually to the Princess, while entertaining her in the gallery: she listened to what I said attentively, and then walking to the window,

dow, desired me to point out the man, who was sitting to rest himself, with his eyes fixed intently on the house; Elizabeth remained at the window buried in thought; at last, turning towards me, she demanded, if I esteemed her enough to run some hazard for her sake? I assured her with an eagerness proportioned to the desire I had to serve her, that she could command nothing I would not execute with joy. She replied, “had not she expected such an answer, she had not ventured such a question;—what I wish then, continued the Princess, is that, when you can find him alone, you will tell that man, I have seen, and know him; and since I cannot doubt his intention is to render me some service, I request he will signify its nature by you; but as he may doubt the sincerity of a gentleman, whose interest seems so opposite to his own, shew him this jewel, he will remember it, and say I bid you tell him, that it was the gift of his father to me some years ago.”

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“ The Princess then took from her arm a remarkable diamond, and gave it to my care ; I withdrew from her presence, and never did night seem longer than that I spent, before it was possible for me to execute her command ; but resolved not to lose a moment, I arose very early, and placed myself in a thicket, through which I knew he must pass. His reluctance to mix with the daily labourers, whose happiness reaches not beyond a coarse meal, and a coarse jest, made him usually come alone, and when the rest were past, I saw him approach. Certain, without knowing who he was, that he must be a man of distinction, I drew near him with respect, and delivered my embassy ; the confusion and doubt my address occasioned, vanished at sight of the diamond ; he fell into raptures at the goodness of the Princess, and no words seemed sufficient to testify his gratitude for my service.

“ Acquainted enough with the world to know the placing a confidence is the surest way of attaching a young mind, he made no secret of his name, and gave ... into

into my hands a letter as valuable to him as his life.

Elizabeth, disgusted at the free hope he prest, or perhaps unwilling to remove herself still farther from the throne by offending her sister, declined the proposal of the Earl, who neglected no instance to induce her to change her mind, as he could never hope to find a time so favourable for her escape: he fancied at last, I had an interest in her rejecting him, and when nothing could prevail with her, lavished all his reproaches on me, as the capital obstacle. I know not to what extremities he might have carried his resentment, had not Lord Arundel, to whom the head gardener had declared his suspicion of this man, from having found some jewels sewed in his garb, caused him to be apprehended; but his ill health and infirmities, disabling him from an immediate examination, notice was sent to the Court, and the Earl confined with caution. The Princess alarmed at this accident, which she fore-saw her enemies would construe to her disadvantage, without giving her a chance to justify

justify herself, forgot that calmness, which constituted in her early years the meritorious part of her character. I too sensibly felt her afflictions, not to participate in this; and to prove my sympathy, formed a design, which the romantic generosity incident to youth alone could justify.

“ Intrusted with the charge of the criminal, it was very easy for me, in the dead of night, to set him free; but to render my generosity complete and ensure his escape, I ordered a horse to be in readiness in the thicket as for myself, and furnishing him with some clothes of my own, conducted him to the garden gate, and returned more satisfied with my own conduct than I ever yet had been.

“ The consequences of his escape suggested themselves immediately to Lord Arundel on his receiving the information; he sent for me, as my connivance was evident, and enraged at my refusing even a reason for it, save the promise I had made, he ordered me to be confined, and dispatched a messenger to court with the full particulars of the prisoner’s enlargement.

largement. A short time, however, abated his resentment ; he reproached himself for a rashness as culpable as my own, and sent several of his servants to stay the first, but not finding him return, he was pleased at once to forget my obstinacy, and, by coming to visit me, shew he pardoned my fault — He then told me he had nothing to propose, that would ensure my safety, but immediate flight ; and not doubting that he could appease the Queen, recommended me to set out immediately for Ireland, to take refuge with his brother-in-law, Sir Patrick Lineric. Overwhelmed with his goodness, I had no way to atone for my error, but obedience, and prepared for my journey without hesitation ; — the reluctance with which the Earl parted from me, was a cutting reproach ; but heaven did not suffer me to escape unpunished : I was met on the road by a party of guards, conducted by the first messenger, who, ignorant of the change in Lord Arundel's resolution, imagined I was making my escape likewise, and conjured the officer to seize me : astonished

at a stroke so unforeseen and unlucky, I delivered up my arms without resistance, and was conducted to the Tower of London.

“ Some days elapsed without my seeing any but my guard, when I was conducted before the privy council, and interrogated concerning what I knew of the prisoner and his designs; but refusing to answer, I was remanded back to a closer dungeon and harder fare. This was repeated several times, insomuch that I was astonished at not being tried and sentenced by the law; when one day I was agreeably surprized at seeing Lord Arundel enter my prison. Want of air and proper food had so altered me, that the good man, neglecting his commission, wept like an infant on my neck; but recovering, and remembering he was not sent to console me, and had witnesses attending to report our discourse, he began with conjuring me, by every power he had over me, as a father, a guardian, and a friend, to provide for my own safety by a discovery of all I knew, without which my

ny life would be devoted, in spite of his efforts, and the affliction of losing the only prop of his age, would infallibly shorten his days.

“ The gentleness of this address, the concern which wrung every venerable feature, pierced my soul; and, although I could not betray the Princess, I will candidly confess I lamented my rash officiousness; but as repentance was fruitless, I had only to summon patience to endure an evil I had brought on myself; nevertheless, to afflict the benefactor, to whose goodness I owed all, was a trial indeed. I threw myself at his feet, I conjured him only to remember my obstinacy, to cast me from his heart, but never to employ a power I revered, to make me odious and contemptible,—assuring him, an honourable death was, in my eyes, infinitely more to be desired than a life prolonged by treachery and ingratitude.— He regarded me with attention, and after seeming to deliberate for a moment, he proceeded to offer me the most splendid rewards. I stopt him; “ oh,

my Lord ! exclaimed I, can you think so meanly of the man before you, as to believe, after resisting your intreaties, he can poorly be bribed to do ill ; how truly unworthy then were I of the name of your son ? ”

“ What can I say ? ” said he, turning to some men present, and drawing his hands from mine to clasp them together in an agony of grief ; “ how seek to corrupt a constancy I admire ? Adieu, my dear son, I am unequal to the task imposed on me. May the God who taught you principles so just, bless and protect you, whatever your fate ; my days may still be fewer than yours, and this is, perhaps, an eternal farewell.—Adieu again, I will never forget you ; ” saying these words, he caught hold of some persons present, who rather carried than led him out.

“ I had before this been supported by pride, but the sense of doing wrong, had never mingled with my feelings till now : my own life had hitherto presented nothing to make it particularly valuable ; but

but that of Lord Arundel, was a blessing to himself and his country: and what right had I to shorten it? I, whose peculiar duty it was to watch over his decay, and smooth his passage to the grave; this remembrance gave me inexpressible grief.

" I found likewise that the court, from my resolution, imagined the plot of much more consequence than it really was ; yet after so many denials I could not declare the whole, without bringing an imputation, more terrible than death, on my memory : I therefore called together every reflection that could fortify my mind, and waited my fate with composure.

"A very few days after this interview put an end to the life of a Queen, whose cruelty cast a blot alike on her sex and religion, and Elizabeth being placed on the throne by the voice of the people, made the opening of my prison doors one of her first cares;—she did me the honour of seeing me in the garments I had worn in my confinement, and gave me her royal word that she could find no greater pleasure in

her sovereignty, than that of rewarding my fidelity.

“ An alloy was prepared to this satisfaction; Lord Arundell had expired the night before of the gout in his stomach; but, knowing I might claim my safety from the new Queen, he had left me joint heir with his niece, of his estates, with only one condition, which was, that of marrying her; ordering the covenant should be fulfilled in two years, and if either party refused to comply, his or her share of the fortune should go to the other.—All the advantages I could have reaped, had he left me sole heir of his wealth, would never have compensated me for his loss. This blow lessened the hopes of my life; I had promised myself in the first moments of my freedom, to convince this nobly disinterested friend, that independence could never lessen my gratitude, but would rather increase an attachment to which the malicious could then assign no motive but the just one.

“ The Queen, in the first years of her reign, loaded me with honors, called me

her

her knight, nor entered into any amusement in which I was not a party. The obsequious behaviour of my equals, flattered a vanity latent in my heart, and persuaded me they saw deeper into her intentions than myself. I was much younger than Elizabeth, and involved in another engagement, yet the world thought she loved me; but being little disposed to matrimony, and by the Queen's bounty enabled to indulge myself, I gave up to Miss Lineric the estates of her uncle, without even seeing her, because I would not offend the relation of Lord Arundell, by giving the world reason to believe I did it from distaste. This circumstance no sooner reached the ear of the Queen, than it filled her with gladness visible to the whole Court, which confirmed them in the belief I was destined one day to share her rank. I had reason to be convinced, from many circumstances of the Queen's conduct, known but to myself, that she really had an affection for me, and only waited till some of the elder nobility, who were my rivals, had given up the pursuit,

and till my years allowed her to make me her choice, without bringing a censure on her prudence.

"Attached to Elizabeth rather by gratitude than affection, I had patience enough to wait her resolution, and entertained myself rather with the gaieties, than the politics of the kingdom. It was at this time the beautiful Mary of Scotland shone forth (fatally for herself) the rival of Elizabeth, and destroyed that peace which prosperity and admiration had contributed to bestow on our Queen. In the adversity of her youth, she flattered herself with supporting a superiority over her oppressor by a discreet submission; but to meet with so powerful a rival in beauty, talents, and empire, when at the summit of her glory, was a stroke as mortifying as unexpected: Elizabeth ever sickened at the name of Mary, and, by extravagant praises, pointed the severe remarks she continually made on her conduct. She maintained with a rigid exactness the advantages she possessed, from the situation

ation of her kingdom, over her neighbour, and continually affected to chuse her a husband from the handsome and dissolute nobles of her Court. Melvil, the Scotch Ambassador, among other presents to Elizabeth, brought with him a picture of the Queen of Scots; it was done by a French artist exquisitely skilled; this little portrait Elizabeth always wore hanging to her breast: I never beheld it without admiring the finest imitation art could execute of the most finished production of nature. One evening while the Queen was conversing with me, my eyes, by a kind of habit, were fixed on this ornament: she suddenly rose, and retired in great wrath to her apartiment. She shut herself up three days before the extravagance of her resentment permitted her to form any resolution; at last the Countess of Somerset came to me with the picture, and an assurance from the Queen, that as she perceived I could never be happy without the original, she should alter her designs, and had sent directions

to

to the Earl of Bedford to propose me to Mary.

“ Thunderstruck at so excessive and ridiculous a jealousy, I neglected nothing to satisfy the Queen ; I made a thousand protestations of my indifference to the Queen of Scots in vain ; Elizabeth’s pride was offended, and that was the hardest to appease of all her passions—she insisted on my keeping the picture, and haughtily forbade me ever to remember her but as my sovereign.

“ I retired from her presence piqued by her haughtiness, which, though a quality adapted to her rank, is disgusting in her sex. The picture of Mary was yet in my hand—when I remembered the sweetness and affability she was famed for, the infinite superiority of her charms, and the softness of her character, I was grateful to Elizabeth for her anger ; since it broke the ties my gratitude had formed, and left me in hope of a happier fate.—I repented a message I had sent off to the Earl of Bedford to forbid his mentioning my

my name, and only wished it might arrive too late.—In my union with Elizabeth I saw I must be a cypher, for she was jealous to excess of her power: with Mary I might share a kingdom, and, by studying her humour, render her and myself happy. All our wishes are not, however, to be successful. The Queen of Scots, prepossessed that Elizabeth intended to raise me to the throne of England, believed the proposal a jest, and treated it as such. The Earl of Bedford gave into this, from a conviction that he should oblige me by it, and thus I found myself, after having aspired to two Queens, without hopes of either.

“ From the moment of my being neglected by Elizabeth, I had found myself in the condition of those favorites who fall from the pinnacle of greatness to obscurity. After seeing my presence make a circle, and my apartment a Court, I appeared alone, or continued in solitude. Vanity, and not generosity, had governed me, and of those who followed, no one really loved, and all envied me; they rejoiced

joyed in my disgrace, and ridiculed my ambition. What shall I say, ladies? shall I give false motives for my actions, or confess faults my youth may excuse? I must be sincere, whether that sincerity interests you in my favour or otherwise.

“ Resolved at all events to have the pleasure of mortifying my enemies—I wrote to the Queen, assuring her, the honors she had loaded me with, were incumbrances, since she had withdrawn her favor, and if my offence (unwitting as it was) exceeded forgiveness, I requested to resign my employments and retire to Kenilworth. This letter I took an opportunity of presenting to her in the gardens of Sheen, and, far from pronouncing a severe sentence, she was pleased to shed tears, and tenderly reproach me on the lightness of my attachment; on which I took the picture of the Queen of Scots, and casting it into the Thames, entreated her to bury with it the remembrance of my fault. — She gave me her hand to kiss, and I had the pride of leading her to the Court, reinstated in her favor.

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“ This disgrace taught me a useful lesson ; which was to employ my power but to serve the worthy, the only way to secure friends and avoid making enemies. I learnt how to rate justly all who surrounded me, to despise flattery, and by never elevating myself, put it out of the power of malice or envy in future to humiliate me. The Queen was pressed by the Parliament to marry ; she had promised to deliberate on the proposal, and my interest in her heart, made me hope a favorable conclusion to my suit, when an unfortunate chance overturned all my schemes and hopes, and made me tremble whenever the Queen opened her lips to me, lest I should hear a resolution which was so lately my utmost wish.

“ Sir Walter, the head of the Devereux family, was lately created Earl of Essex ; he had been sent to Ireland to subdue the rebels, where he married. He returned to Court to present his bride, whom I had scarce regarded a moment, when my heart became sensible of a sentiment

timent unknown to it before. I was ambitious of her notice, and envied the courtiers who surrounded her; I yet trembled to approach her, and the compliment of introduction was delivered by me with a low voice and timid air; the cold dignity of her manner, and her instantly turning from me to converse with Lord Sands, affronted me highly. I examined all I had said or done, but not finding any thing exceptionable on my part, I condemned her as a flattered girl, vain of accidental advantages even to folly; I retired with the Queen without taking any farther notice of Lady Essex. The Queen gave a ball that evening: I dreſt several hours too ſoon, and continually fancied the clock ſtood. Not doubting that I had the power of mortifying Lady Essex, I determined to uſe it; even her Lord ſeemed united in her offence, though I had no complaint to make againſt him but that he had married her. In ſhort, pleafed or angry, I could think of nothing but her, and though I ſtaid at home till quite tired

tired, I found myself the first in the drawing room.

“ The Queen learning I was there, and pleased with my attention, which she placed to her own account, sent for me to her closet ; among other questions, she asked how I liked Lady Essex, and the asperity with which I censured her, was far from displeasing Elizabeth, who had a talent for satire and was fond of all who excelled in it.

“ We entered the room at the same moment with the lovely bride, more obviously so as more adorned. The Queen turned to me who was leaning on the back of her chair--“ I think, said she, my Lord, I must take the liberty of appointing you to dance with Lady Essex, that the Court may have an opportunity of admiring how well I have matched her.” “ I thought, returned I, your Majesty had promised me the pleasure of entertaining you; and, surely Lady Essex has matched herself much more happily.” “ Lord Leicester, madam, said that Lady in an ironical tone, is uniform in his opinion

nion respecting me, and for once I agreed with him." Saying this, she gave her hand to her Lord, who honoured the younger Cecil with it. Amazed at a pique, I could no way explain, I remained in a sullen reverie, till the Queen interrupted it by asking, if I did not think Lady Essex's wit inclined to the severe? I replied "when I knew whether she had any sense I should judge of her wit, but that at present she was perfectly unintelligible to me." Why, surely my Lord, cried the Queen, leaning on the arm of her chair and raising her eyes to mine, you know she was Miss Lilleric?" What a fund of intelligence was conveyed in these few words, and what a revolution did they make in my mind!—To find I had refused, and in refusing insulted the woman on whom my happiness must depend, or, rather, from whose resentment my misery was begun.—Pride, anger, and ambition vanished; my heart overflowing with chagrin and love, applauded her just disdain, and owned she could never despise me for my stupidity half so much as

I did

I did myself. Insensible to all the discourse of the Queen, my eyes pursued with a vain and late regret the beauteous bride, till the meanders of the dance eluding my sight, I struck my head in a transport against the Queen's chair, and being obliged to excuse myself, complained of a vertigo and retired.

" I was interrupted in the midst of the disagreeable reflections arising from the past scene, by Elizabeth's physician, whom she had graciously ordered to attend me. He easily invented a reason for a malady his art could neither cause or cure, and having directed me to be bled, left me to repose. The Queen sent several messengers to enquire after me, and when I paid my duty next to her, almost gave me a relapse by dismissing her attendants. Perplexed and uneasy, I hardly dared to raise my eyes, or anticipate her determination. I met hers, which seemed equally irresolute, and a pause of a few moments was at last interrupted by Elizabeth.

“ She informed me, that after the most mature deliberation, she found, that although she preferred me to all men existing, she could not by marrying make me happy, or be so herself; that in yielding to this weakness of her heart, she should for ever fully her reputation for wisdom, which would always, while single, teach her how to manage other potentates, either by hope or fear; and that such a degradation, in general opinion, would too sensibly affect her.— Leicester, said she, thou seest my ingenuous motives—I know thou lovest me, and to make thee some amends for the grief this must give thee, be assured by our royal word, that we will never marry another man however glorious his rank. Consider, therefore, whatever matrimonial treaties are on foot as tubs thrown out to the whale, and remember Elizabeth’s friendship shall distinguish thee almost as much as her choice could.

“ I kissed the hand she held out to me with apparent chagrin, but in reality she had relieved my heart from a heavy load.

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I ventured to admire a fortitude which reduced me to despair, and thus amply gratified that vanity, which in her, takes the lead of sensibility. Nevertheless, I was struck with her demand of a solemn promise on my part, never to marry without her consent, and considered it as a selfish and arbitrary exaction unknown to a tender heart.

“ The whole Court learnt I had lost my hopes without losing my influence. The Queen, just to her promise, gave me a palpable superiority on every occasion, and I only desired it to make my homage more gratifying to the fair Lady Essex, who shewed too much anger to rob me of hope. Had she appeared equally indifferent and polite, she would totally have discouraged me, but a man may reasonably flatter himself with the prospect of a pardon, as long as a lady deigns to appear offended. I made every possible concession to her pride, and the pleasure she found in humbling me, interwove me insensibly with her happiness.

“ I should spare to your virgin delicacy, ladies, the acknowledgment of a disgraceful and guilty love, was it not absolutely essential to mark the remainder of my story. There was a levity and inconsistency in the manners of Lady Effex, which soon awakened her Lord’s jealousy; and as she had always been indulged to folly, she could so ill brook any restraint, that it threw her the more readily into my power. The belief that I was loved alone by her, and had myself reduced her to make another choice, enabled her to preserve a merit with me even in her fall. The few hours we could steal, were lavished in the most ardent affection. I grew almost as jealous of her as her Lord, and blest the caution with which he shut her up more and more, even from me, since it totally excluded all other lovers. The oftener I saw her, however, the more ardently I desired it; and when at last her Lord was appointed to the command of the forces in Ireland, whither he despotically resolved to carry her, my passion and grief kept pace with

with hers; the Court presented nothing to me worthy to supply the loss of one so amiable, and had not the Queen given me a command in the Low Countries, I know not how I should long have concealed the emptiness of my bosom now its tenant was flown.

“ Several years past away in a variety of scenes without my seeing Lady Essex, when the early death of her Lord left her at liberty to fix her residence in England. I returned home on the first intelligence. The sober widowhood in which she lived, made it difficult for me to gain admission to her presence, which I at last effected by a disguise. Her beauty shone through her sables with new and more touching graces, while my heart betrayed me into involuntary exclamations and caresses. She wept, and retreating from my arms, assured me, the only action of her life she repented was that attachment which had sullied her innocence, and which she was resolved to expiate by eternal seclusion and repentance. All my intreaties were fruitless. She burst

from me into an apartment where she told me, her brother, Mr. Lineric, was, who instantly rushed into the room, and demanded by what right I had presumed to detain her? I answered truly, by that of a lover alone, and flattered myself with gaining the interest of this young Irishman in favor of my pretensions, by obtaining a considerable post for him the next day. I

silily discerned her aim was a marriage with me, which from every reason, and more especially the promise I had made to the Queen, I wished to avoid. Endless negotiations were carried on, and these exasperated the weakness of my heart to such a degree, that I forgot her error. Vanity but too easily persuades a generous man to pardon a frailty of which he is the cause and the object. Lady Essex listened very readily to an honourable proposal, and gave me at Greenwich an exclusive claim to that hand so long, so passionately beloved.

“Anxious to conceal this event from the Queen, who rigidly maintained over me the rights of a jealous lover, while she disclaimed

disclaimed the title, I visited my bride very rarely, and my affection rather increased than diminished ; in fact, I was the more completely happy when with, because I hourly experienced, in every absence, the impossibility of being happy without her."

To return one moment to the poor Matilda ; from the moment Lord Leicester named this Lady, my heart presaged her his wife ; the closing evening had luckily prevented the various changes of my countenance from being visible, but the supprest swellings of my heart at last conquered my spirits, and I sunk back at this part of his recital, if not fainting, at least senseless.

Lord Leicester, alarmed, united with the terrified Ellinor to recover me ; when fearing my full eyes would betray my heart, I urged indisposition, and besought his excuse for retiring to my chamber. He made many apologies for having fatigued me, to which Ellinor alone could answer. As soon as he left us, giving

way to an irresistible impression of sadness, I threw my arms round Ellinor, and wept bitterly; her generous tears streamed with mine, and we seemed fully to mingle souls without exchanging one word.

"I understand you, my beloved sister, said she, and will spare your delicacy, but you wanted courage to hear the whole, and this lady is not immortal. Think better of yourself and your hopes, my dear Matilda, for Ellinor becomes a prophet in your cause, and says Lord Leicester and you were born for each other."

This little sally could not call the smile she wished for into my cheek. I was the more hurt at this event, because I had, (though I know not for what reason except that we all too readily believe what we wish) overlooked it in my arrangement of suppositions. I past the whole night in walking about my room, and lamenting. "He is married! I would exclaim; that invaluable heart and hand are then another's! Oh, just Heaven! have I then inherited my mother's fate with her features?

tutes? Is a guilty passion ordained to be the crime and scourge of all my race? let me at least bury it in my bosom. Yes, cried I, with conscious dignity, I may be unfortunate but not censurable: the daughter of Mary shall be worthy the Stuart line. When this admired Leicester returns into the world, he shall remember with reverence this innocent asylum, and the family of Howard shall be still dear to him. Oh may he return in safety to that most happy of wives! while I waste my youth in a solitude only pleasing by its having once been his shelter" Self would then predominate, and floods of impassioned tears wash away every just resolution. Alas, I forget to whom I am writing; the language and thoughts of lovers must be uniformly the same, and I can only excuse these rhapsodies, by observing a tender heart traces its own emotions under the name of another with a melancholy pleasure.

Lord Leicester, at the usual hour, the next day resumed his narrative.

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“ The wars in the Low Countries carried me abroad half the year; and the remainder I divided between the Court and my Lady. Security perhaps produced carelessness, and the French Ambassador, whose Court was interested in depriving me of the Queen’s favor, as the chief obstacle to her appointed marriage with the Duke of Anjou, by some unexpected vigilance traced out the secret of my marriage, of which he immediately apprized Elizabeth. I had the vexation one morning to receive the most marked tokens of her displeasure, for she is but too well known to give an unbounded license to her tongue, whenever her passions are awakened. She ended her virulent reproaches with ordering me immediately to join the army in the Netherlands, and never to return without her permission. Thunderstruck both with the discovery and her conduct, I bowed and retired, without attempting to offer a single word in my own defence. The Queen made me however some atonement for her violence, by refusing the Duke,

when

when every preliminary was settled; which cruelly disappointed the French Ambassador.

“ No longer condemned to silence, my retinue escorted Lady Leicester to Kenilworth Castle, as the safest residence while the Queen’s anger continued; and I obeyed her in departing for Holland. I soon learnt that Elizabeth’s chief reason for not recalling me, was the being obliged to pardon my wife, to whom, by a most unaccountable whim, she had transferred all her resentment, and whom she hoped to punish by continuing to separate us. The times, and a variety of reasons, made our correspondence uncertain; months sometimes elapsed, and without I sent an express, I obtained no news of one so dear to me. I was unjust enough to impute the difficulties by turns to the Queen and my enemies; and piqued at Elizabeth’s ungenerous motive for exiling me, resolved to pass over incognito into England, and conduct Lady Leicester into the Netherlands, or, if she was averse to that measure, endeavour to appease the Queen.

“ I ex-

“ I executed my design so happily, that my arrival at my own Castle was the first news of my intention to Lady Leicester, whom I found confined to the house by indisposition. It struck me her joy was nearly allied to sorrow; but the thought was momentary, and I imputed it to her malady. Her beauty appeared much impaired, but placing the alteration merely to grief for my absence, it became a new call upon my tenderness. She told me the terror she was under; for Elizabeth had made her almost a prisoner in her own house, where she had passed fifteen months without any company except her brother, who had kindly followed her into this solitude to fix her influence over an ungovernable train of servants to whom she was a stranger. I returned Lineric every acknowledgment, and complimented him with a fine diamond given me by the States on a former occasion.

“ A long absence from this mansion where art and nature unite to produce almost the effect of novelty, made it appear

pear a most heavenly retreat from the noise and bustle of a camp. I passed the afternoon in surveying the gardens, and directing many necessary alterations.

“ Infensibly fatigued beyond bearing, I consented, at the persuasion of my Lady, to retire and endeavour to rest an hour early in the evening. I had slept several, when my valet, Le Val, threw open the curtains, and with a countenance full of horror and intelligence, deprecated the wrath such a rude salutation must necessarily occasion.

“ Amazed beyond expression, I bad him recollect himself, since, while thus confused, I could not rely on his accounts, however kind his intention.”

“ Pardon me, my Lord, said he, the liberty your safety reduces me to take, of sounding the truth of the grievous intelligence I am obliged in duty to reveal, by first questioning your Lordship: have you remarked that almost all your domesticks are changed?”

“ I was struck with conviction by the question,

question, though I had not made the observation.

“ No, no, said he warmly, there was a devilish reason for that.”

“ Beware, Le Val, returned I, of what you would insinuate; for if, without proof, you dare asperse—”

“ I have but too sufficient reasons, my Lord, added he, shaking his head, but they shall never pass this bosom if you give an affirmative to my next demand.—Are you convinced, my Lord, that man is brother to my Lady who is called so?”

“ I hesitated.”

“ Let us hope not, said he with vehemence, lest we shock humanity; for as sure as one God made them both, they are but too well agreed.”

“ Horror-struck with the idea, my heart sickened, and involuntarily admitted a doubt but too many circumstances corroborated.—Her love of retirement might proceed more from such an attachment than regard for me—Nay, even her marriage be but an honourable veil to the

loosest connexion. I had neither power nor will to silence the poor fellow, who went on with an honest eagerness—

“ Of all the servants long retained by your Lordship, two only remain, and the rest are a set of ungoverned Irish, attached by country to both brother and sister. The sewer owns he kept his place by silence and submission, and dame Margery, the housekeeper, most probably, by managing all my Lady’s secrets. But the sewer will make oath of my Lady’s intercourse with Lineric, and, that far from wishing for your return, they are alarmed at it beyond measure, as my Lady expects every hour to be delivered. Nor is this all.”

“ Give me time to breathe, Le Val ! cried I, for this horrible intelligence unmans me.”

“ I could not be silent and know you wronged, my Lord, though your sword were to rip out my heart. But I fear the worst—I fear lest something is now hatching against your life, for my Lady is in Margery’s room, directing some carp in the

the manner you used to like so well ; and I saw Lineric's servant set out for Coventry, from whence he is this moment returned with a horse his speed has half killed."

" Well, well, said I, be assured I shall consider over all you have said, and will avoid tasting the dish you mention."

" Ah, my Lord ! that will only convince them you suspect their diabolical intention, and the servants of their own placing form a little army in the house. If my Lord will hear the advice of his servant, I have a way to propose, which will have no ill consequence if no ill is meant ; if otherwise, it will fall only on the contrivers. Another dish composed of the same ingredients, the sewer can place at the bottom of the table ; when the supper is served, I will pretend to be drunk, and making a scuffle in the adjoining hall, my Lady and her brother will naturally take the alarm, and interfere ; the sewer can in the interim change the two dishes, by which means my Lady will taste the dish

“dish of her own preparing, and must abide the event.”

“This plan was of itself so innocent, and well contrived, that I resolved to authorise it, and Le Val, satisfied with his discovery, retired. He had indeed relieved his mind, but what a weight had he left on mine! The bare idea had filled me with a thousand horrors. Every thing confirms us in either love or hatred.—The silence of my friends when my marriage was discovered; her tears, her altered person, that remissness in writing, for which I had in my own heart censured the Queen—all, in short, I so lately thought inestimable proofs of her love, now rose as terrible presumptions of her guilt; and yet, when I saw her enter my chamber presently after, and tenderly accuse me for so long an absence, I could have received a mortal draught from her hand with less pain than it cost me to suspect her.

The day was closing, and the table covered when I entered the Hall, occasioned by my long sleep. Le Val began the

premeditated uproar, and Lady Leicester with her brother flew towards the door; whence the attendants had before departed, eager to encrease the bustle. The faithful sewer, on whom I kept an eye; exchanged the dishes in the manner agreed, and we returnrd to the table. I observed to my Lady that she trembled violently, which she naturally enough attributed to the alarm. Assuring me she had herself prepared the carp, she insisted on my doing honor to it, and urging her to bear me company, I accepted her invitation. An involuntary emotion made me every moment ready to prevent her tasting the exchanged dish; but the pleasure with which the infamous Lineric seemed to see me swallow the supposed death, silenced me. Scarce was the table cleared, when Lady Leicester sunk back in strong convulsions. Conscience made Lineric exclaim, “poison, poison!” Every common antidote was administered in vain; she was borne to her chamber in an hopeless state, and I retired to mine to meditate alone. This terrible conviction
of

of the unhappy fate prepared for me on my return from an exile she alone had occasioned, converted my love into horror and aversion. She raved dreadfully at intervals, and persisting to the last I had poisoned her, expired early in the morning. The blackness of the soul diffused itself over the body, and the proof of her infidelity was too obvious in her person.

“ Whether Lineric’s constitution was less liable to infection, or that he had tasted the carp more sparingly, it was not till she expired that he found himself affected; but the dose was too deadly for him to escape. Convinced by his sister’s example, that there was no effectual antidote, he summoned all his Irish domestics into his chamber. The faithful Le Val chose that moment to enter mine, and inform me of the consultation, which he insisted would produce some fatal event, if I did not consent that moment to mount horses which were ready, and attended by him and Williams set out for London; this step would give me the advantage of first representing the fact, while it secured my

person from any savage revenge ; the fewer in the interim, by the intervention of the tenants, might seize on the Castle the moment the russians abandoned it in pursuit of me.

“ This advice had its due weight with me, and quitting the Castle by stealth, I rode off with Le Val and Williams from my own servants as the worst of assassins, and from my home as my grave.” It was now day-break, and we had not proceeded many miles, when, from the top of a hill, we perceived a party apparently pursuing ; having the fleetest horses, we kept the advantage for near twenty miles, when, by taking some shorter road unknown to us, we saw them very near. St. Vincent’s Abbey appeared at the same moment in sight, which Le Val conjured me to seek, giving him my cloak to mislead the assassins. We had no time for deliberation ; I struck into the wood, where, finding my horse an incumbrance, I left him to his fate, and was endeavouring to make my way through the bushes, without any certainty of being right, when

when I had the happiness to meet so fair a deliverer."

Lord Leicester thus concluded his story; but oh! how much of my life had evaporated during the relation! The unconquerable anxiety with which I followed him, united my heart for ever with his; and convinced me, no disparity of either situation or years can restrain the eager sentiments of youth seeking for merit. As the only acknowledgment for his noble frankness, I in turn related the little tale already repeated, of our melancholy birth, and undecided fate. Tears, composed of every melting sensation, seemed to fall from my eyes on his heart. Those fine eyes were teeming with some generous consolation, when a sudden noise obliged us to separate. Hardly could he regain the chamber, hallowed as Mrs. Marlow's, ere Father Anthony joined us: the natural austerity of his air heightened by some present chagrin. He threw himself into a chair, and preserved a long silence; which, fear of his having penetrated into our mystery, prevented my

breaking. Confused beyond description, a thousand colours chased each other from my cheek ; nor had I power to raise my eyes to my sister, who, accustomed equally to love and honour me, seemed, in holding my hand, to have gained a sufficient protection.

“ Unfortunate children ! cried he, with a deep sigh, Heaven has at last completed the calamitous circumstances under which you were born : destined to an imprisonment as lasting as your royal mother’s, you have but the melancholy advantage of chusing it. Lord Scroope is dead in the confinement and disgrace with which Elizabeth rewarded him : his lands, his honors, the very spot on which you stand, are, are the property of a distant relation, and you now see before you your only friend—a feeble, helpless friend ; bending daily towards that grave you alone render displeasing to him. The moment may yet come, when the rights of your mother will ascertain yours, and all I can do for you in the interim, is to convey you secretly into France, and place you under

the

the protection of the family of Guise; their prudence or their pride, may equally induce them to secure you an asylum in a monastery."

The terrible alternative implied in these words, froze up my blood; and the beatings of my heart died away:—to become an exile from England—to forget Lord Leicester—or to be forgot by him—to be delivered up a martyr to the family of Guise; perhaps by them tyrannically buried in a cloister, a perjured self-condemned wretch, whose soul was full of an earthly image, while devoting itself to its Maker. All the arguments and entreaties Father Anthony made use of in a long harangue, were lost upon me; I knew him to be speaking but by the motion of his lips, and offered up to God, in my tears, a confutation of all he could advance. He left us not till too late for another interview with Lord Leicester; and I past the night in an anguish time can never erase from my memory—pale, unrefreshed, either by sleep or dress, I met

my Lord next morning, more like a spectre than myself. He took my hand, and expressing his surprise but by a glance, kissed it in tender silence. I did not dare raise my eyes to his, and tears stealing from under their lids, fell on the united hands. Oh, how much was expressed in the silence of that moment! I seemed to understand all I wished, and at length respiration freely. Ellinor, unrestrained by the tender delicacy which actuated me, declared to Lord Leicester at once the fate allotted us, and her utter detestation of it. The eagerness with which he entered into our interests, bespoke something stronger than friendship. A thousand times he assured Ellinor of his esteem and affection: to me he said nothing, but pressing the hand he still held, its trembling confessed it knew all the distinction. A ray of pleasure once more enlightened my soul: methought at that moment I could have borne every evil fortune can inflict. No, he will never forget me, sighed I to myself, in whatever remote solitude I am again

again lost to him ; this dreary Recess, the daughters of Mary, in their rustic garb, and lowly manner, will eclipse all the glories of a court, all the gifts of Elizabeth. For the remainder of his stay, a serene delight, which neither arose from, nor can be conveyed by language, animated us alike ; the intercourse of the eyes and heart took place of that of the tongue, and perhaps nothing was more remote from our thoughts than what we conversed about : till my Lord fixed my attention by declaring he would no longer intrude on our goodness than till the next morning. A sigh accompanied these words, and a sigh was my only reply. Ellinor, who ever treated him with a freedom inseparable from a disinterested regard, insisted he ought not to quit so safe an asylum rashly. He replied, he should bury himself with us, did he not hope to revisit it in a more acceptable manner. Breaking off at these words with an irresolution and timidity which shewed he had not said all he intended, after pausing a few moments he resumed,

ed, “Can you pardon, Ladies, a friendship perhaps too officious? But since your natural support, and just hopes have failed, may I flatter myself you will have the goodness to suspend your resolutions respecting the future, till I can appear with honor again before you? A short time is due to clearing my own fame; for ill would it become me to claim the guardianship of the Royal Mary’s beauteous children, while loaded with opprobrium.” He was proceeding, when the cough of Father Anthony startled us. Scarce had Ellinor time to lead my Lord out at one door, ere he entered at another to visit Alice, who had sunk under the fatigue and grief attending the loss of her mistress. With an art I had newly learnt, I snatched up a book, in which I affected to be so absorbed, as not to hear him till at my shoulder. With real perturbation I arose on his speaking; and, as usual, was preceding him to Alice’s chamber, when he called me back in haste, and pointing to the ground, bade me give him what lay there. But what words can

express

express the various emotions which ran through my frame, when I perceived it was the picture of Elizabeth, which the Earl had, in retiring, somehow or other dropt! Instead of obeying, I snatched it up, and attempted to hide it in my bosom; when, with a strong arm, the Father wrested it from me, and read in my features half the mystery: the name engraved on it, the date, all put him out of doubt as to the owner, and nothing remained but to learn how I had come by it. Without the finesse of my sex on the occasion, as soon as my terrors and tears permitted, I related the whole adventure incoherently. With his customary sternness, he overwhelmed me with reproaches. "Rash girl, cried he, could no human prudence save thee? Did not the lost Saint, whom I must ever lament, entomb herself merely to preserve a secret, the folly of a baby's curiosity betrayed ere her ashes were cold? What confidence can be placed in the favorite of Elizabeth, whose interest it undoubtedly must be, to flatter those in whose hands his life now

now is, and then deliver them up to exalt himself by the total silent ruin of the Stuarts? prudence directs us rather to secure ourselves by retaining him for ever here."

"First, may I perish on the block where my father ended his days!" cried I, in a transport of love and grief: let me, oh God, rather be a martyr to the sins of mankind, than submit to partake them! What! be more cruel than the assassins, from whom we saved him? Pardon me, Father, cried I, recovering myself; but you know not the story or the heart of Lord Leicester, who, far from betraying us, is anxious to become our guardian and protector."

"Such a guardian as the wolf is to the lamb, retorted he acrimoniously—who, oh, who would willingly have the management of youth! Unhappy! child, added he, wilt thou inherit the faults with the features of thy mother? an idle weakness like thine sapped all her morals, and left a stain on her life, time never can erase; but

but if not more virtuous, be at least more prudent." 1170

" Hold, Father Anthony, cried I, with a dignity which awed even him into silence, nor cancel all the merit of your cares, by a surmise my soul disdains. Far be it from me to censure a parent, but still farther be it to *deserve* the censure of an indifferent person. I may have erred, but only in innocence; and the life that beats within this bosom, can never issue to a nobler purpose, than to save that of Lord Leicester."

Nothing is more dangerous than to judge a generous and youthful mind harshly: it then is too easily acquitted to itself, and rises against suspicions it is unconscious of deserving. The shock the Father's doubts had given me, brought to light, without one idea of shame, that partiality I durst hardly before acknowledge to myself.

Convinced by my manner, that he had lost his influence over me, he commanded Ellinor to re-conduct my Lord into his presence,

presence, and requested to be left alone with him. I departed most reluctantly, but I would not entirely exasperate him. The injustice of mankind gave me too much reason to dread lest he should affront Lord Leicester, who might unite the innocent with the guilty, and abandon us entirely: aversions extend but too frequently through families; nay, even descend from generation to generation.

Their conference continued two whole hours, while I counted the moments in painful expectation; at last Father Anthony entered our room, and bidding Ellinor entertain Lord Leicester, desired me to collect my spirits, and listen to him.

“ However my suspicions may offend you, young Lady, said he, I will suppose it possible I may know as much of the world, who have passed my youth in it, as you who have yet been confined almost to these walls. Well had it been if you had never gone beyond them. When I tell you

you this Lord you have saved demands your hand, you will indulge a thousand romantic fancies, and see in his request a love as blind as your own. Perhaps there may be something in that: perhaps too he recollects that your mother is the next in succession to the crown of England—that she may die in prison, and that the aversion the English ever entertain to a foreign sway, may prevail over the prior claim of your brother James, and his ambition may be gratified by a preference given to you. The cruel necessity imposed by your unlimited confidence of attaching Lord Leicester to your interest, makes it needless to enumerate the objections I could reasonably urge against your union: the recent loss of his wife, I find, puts it in his power to marry you: you have left yourself no choice but to marry him: and never will I consent to his departing from this Recess, till the contracts I shall dictate are solemnly signed and the marriage completed in all its forms."

"Imagine

“Imagine, Madam, my situation during this speech——” “Oh, Anthony, thy dictatorial manner then was happiness! in one moment to emerge from the abyss of despair, and soar into the regions of bliss: to find the generous Leicester was willing once more to sacrifice his safety for love; once more to risque a displeasure from which he was not yet relieved: to raise me from obscurity—ah! to raise me to himself! a height, in my estimation, beyond the throne of my ancestors! The fond hope, suggested by the Father’s speech, of one day rewarding my Lord’s tenderness, was all I remembered of it. Crowns and sceptres, those play-things in the hands of love, surrounded me in imagination, and impassioned tears rolled down my glowing cheeks, while I said to myself, in the language of Miranda, “I am a fool to weep at what I am glad of.”

Reflection and circumstances a little softened Father Anthony, who saw himself on the point of being relieved from a heavy charge, to which his impoverished

rished fortune, and decaying years, rendered him unequal. The amiable Leicester joined us, and every heart being lightened of its load, an evening of such refined pleasure succeeded, that could I wish to live over one of my whole life, I would select that as the happiest.

The interest, the honour of my Lord, demanded his return to Court, and Father Anthony having prepared due contracts, insisted on my compliance. His commands, and the wishes of Lord Leicester, added to these weighty reasons, over-ruled my sense of decorum, and our hands were united.

The peculiarity of the situation can alone excuse such a marriage; but I was born for obedience. Formed wholly of the mild elements, I wept the disappointment of my wishes ever in silence. Scarce had the transports of finding myself happy given place to reason, when my mother recurred to my mind. Unblest by her matron presence, my nuptials were but half hallowed; nay, un-

blest with her consent. I compared with grief her fate and mine : a long captivity had impaired her health, and no hope of a release to her spirits. I, although pent in a still narrower prison, beheld it enclose almost every human good, and could have consented to end my days in it.

But the honour, the welfare of my Lord ordained otherwise ; every passing hour gave his enemies an advantage. Our servant James had been sent immediately on our marriage to Kenilworth Castle, which he informed us on his return was in the possession of the faithful tenants, who had been able, of all the servants, to secure only Dame Margery. This detestable instrument of a superior's barbarity, more terrified at the idea of an infamous death than any due sense of her crime, attempted to end her days with a remnant of the poison prepared for her Lord ; but being detected, it only supplied a new proof of her guilt. Tormented by fear and despair, she at last found means to strangle herself in the night. In her my Lord

Lord lost one evidence of his innocence, which made his presence at court doubly necessary. The family of Lineric, having received information of the melancholy catastrophe of both brother and sister, from the Irish servants, who had been their abettors, had carried away the bodies, as if to inter them, but kept them in the hands of surgeons, still undetermined how to proceed.

Involved in one fate with my love, I knew no peace even in his arms; but with incessant admonitions drove him from me, refusing resolutely to accompany him: and although his fondness induced him to urge my departure, his reason must suggest to him all its danger. Would Elizabeth, who had thus resented his marrying an equal, ever pardon his inspiring to her blood? and how could we sufficiently guard from others a secret misery features betrayed to him? Actuated but by the single wish of passing my life near Lord Leicester, I neither asked to be known, or honoured by any one but himself, nor to be greeted by a title only endeared to me, because he bore it.

The strong aversion with which I had been taught to regard the reigning Queen, might perhaps influence me in this case. Before I gave my hand to Lord Leicester, I had made him promise never to carry me to court; a promise readily given, since it perfectly accorded with his wishes. Nay, in this happy union, every wish I could form seemed to be completed; I gained to that dear mother, (who never left my thoughts, although I could neither ask her advice or consent in deciding my fate) a powerful friend in the favourite of her unjust rival. I hoped he might yet be prevailed on to attempt her freedom; and I already placed myself at her feet, overcome with the idea of having been the instrument of her deliverance. Alas, Madam, were it not for such vague imaginary joys, how could we exist? All our real pleasures fall infinitely short of these; for the preceding and following afflictions oblige our reason too often to correct them. But fancy, powerful fancy, gains vigour from disappointment; and an infant hope ever arises like

the Phœnix from the ashes of the dying one.'

A week after my marriage, Lord Leicester departed for Court, promising soon to return, and conduct me to Kenilworth, where he had previously resolved I should reside with Ellinor. He depended less on Elizabeth's partiality, than the justice of his cause, and was far from declining a trial, in which he was satisfied his innocence would become conspicuous. He was sorry nevertheless to convince the Queen he had wronged her confidence, only to obtain the most unworthy of her sex.

From his departure I date my entrance into the world. I had rather, till this period, looked on, than lived in it. Now I began to feel its anxieties, the painful consequences of its tenderest ties. Shall I tell you all, Madam, that passed in my heart? Notwithstanding the proof I had received of a matchless affection, I could not persuade myself Lord Leicester would ever return. If the Queen, finding him once more free, and taught his value by his loss,

should at last resolve to espouse him, how could a poor girl, already possessed, and left in a solitude, where even the news of his infidelity could not reach her till too late, how could she weigh against a crown? Where could she hope for justice, when the Sovereign who swears to protect, must find it her interest to condemn her? Overcome with this formidable phantom, I gave myself up for some days to a despair as violent as my love. This imagination was only interrupted by another not less afflicting. How, if his interest in the Queen's heart had expired in his absence; if equally offended at his disobedience and its motive, she should join with his enemies? His proofs appearing less satisfactory to me than himself, I feared it was possible he might be condemned, as a criminal, when he was in reality the devoted victim.

One of these suppositions was as unjust to the Queen, as the other to my dear Lord; and Father Anthony dispelled them

them all by some letters he brought me, I had the happiness to find Lord Leicester was received by the Queen with kindness, and that the family of Lineric, persuaded of his innocence, would not provoke him to make public the infamous design of his late wife, by calling him to a trial ; he had therefore but one caution to observe, which was, to conceal this new union with more care than the last ; and to effect this, he must delay our meeting for some little time, lest his immediately retiring from Court should lead the curious to search into the cause.

My doubts vanished with these proofs of his attention. I had only now to contend with the involuntary hatred I had conceived for the Recess. I wandered through every apartment, without finding rest in any : my impassioned fancy followed my love into the court, and the silence and confinement I lived in, became more and more odious. I beheld with astonishment the composure of my sister, and envied her a tranquillity I would

not have regained, by being unmarried, if I could.

At last the happy hour arrived when I was to quit my retirement. Lord Leicester had projected the mode of my departure ere he left me. Le Val and his valet were the only persons in the secret. To all others, we passed for young women educated in a Convent, who, not finding a call to the monastic life, came with the consent of our friends, to embellish the retirement of Lord Leicester by our musical talents. This tale we were well able to support, for my voice was a very fine one, and the skill and taste of Mrs. Marlow, added to the tuition of a master, had taught me to manage it properly. Ellinor had not the same advantage, but touched the lute with a delicacy so exquisite, that we became necessary to each other; and as I never sung so well without her accompaniment, she had been so accustomed to adapt it to my voice, that something seemed wanting to either, when the other was silent. The passion Lord Leicester had for

for music, in which he was a proficient, gave the strongest probability to the whole. He had paid a handsome sum to accomplish the two daughters of his steward in that science, and the young women were taught to expect an addition to their number. The time Le Val remained in the Recess, preparing every thing for our departure, was long enough for him to seem employed in fetching us from abroad. Lord Leicester came several times to direct all, and to support and cheer us with accounts of the care he had taken to render the apartments destined to us, commodious and agreeable.

The Recess, till now, so calm, so tiresomely tranquil, became at once full of confusion and hurry ; the family pictures were taken from their frames, and conveyed through Father Anthony's cell, gradually to Kenilworth.

By what strange caprice is it, every thing seems dear to us the moment we know we must lose it ! Involuntary tears filled my eyes when the hour of my departure

parture arrived. As much a stranger to the world as if just born into it, how could I promise to myself years as peaceful as I had experienced in the Reefs? Long habit has the art of giving charms to places ; or, rather, it is the people who inhabit them. It seemed to me, as if in quitting the place where the dust of Mrs. Marlow was interred, I quitted likewise her idea : every spot I looked on was marked by some noble sentiment, or tender emotion of that dear lady : but I was unjust to myself, for I have carried in my heart, through every scene of life, her respectable image, and nothing but death can efface it.

To part with those we love, is the most painful stretch of humanity ; but what can make it painful to part with those we do not love ? Separation, like death, seems to erase all the individual ever did to displease us, and leaves no remembrance but of his obliging actions. We lost but little in Father Anthony ; but could he forget what he must lose in us ?¹⁰ His declining

declining years, and ill health, required the tenderest attention; and surely, the care he had shewn in our education gave him a just claim to expect it from us. My feelings in this were superior to my sister's, for he had been the means of my happiness. I joined my intreaties of those of the generous Lord Leicester, to prevail on him to reside in a retirement at Kenilworth: but although he seemed deeply affected at parting with us, he was inflexibly bent on ending his days where those of his sister ended. James still remained to attend on him, and Alice was borne very ill to the carriage which conveyed us away.

We took nothing but the ornaments from the Recess, leaving the furniture ready to accommodate any future unfortunates, whom Father Anthony should think worthy such a relief.

It was in the dusk of the evening we arrived at Kenilworth castle: the steward's wife received us with her daughters. Unconscious of our superiority, they treated us as young people, who sought, from

from the generosity of their master, a comfortable subsistence. Although I had agreed to confirm this story, I felt myself shocked at the freedom they used from it. I could have fallen to them, but was affronted at their rising to me: A little time however reconciled me. It is Lord Leicester's interest, and shall be my pleasure, was always my argument with myself. Mrs. Hart, for that was the name of this domestick, expatiated on her Lord's person, character, and magnificence; she officiously pointed out the rich ornaments of the gallery and apartments, and looked round to us every moment with the impertinent expectation of seeing us filled with the low awe and surprize of people unaccustomed to grandeur. The indifference with which we regarded every thing, was not a less affront to her consequence: she shrunk before it, and passed the remainder of the evening in a cold and haughty silence. Her daughters, not more amiable than herself, gloomily regarded our dresses, and by whispering, excluded us from joining in the conversation.

Such

Such was my introduction into the family it was my right to govern. My heart funk within me ; I believed myself already fallen to a servant, and neglected my Lord Leicester. Unused to the circumspection necessary, where secrecy is desired, I demanded to be welcomed in his arms. I surveyed the eyes of my Ellinor, fearful they might reproach me for having innocently degraded the daughter of the Queen of Scots ; but that dear girl, too delicate to add to my uneasiness, preserved, apparently her gaiety, and sweetly accommodated herself to the people with whom fortune had mingled her.

The alledging fatigue and indisposition, obliged them to conduct us to the apartment allotted us. I should perhaps have wondered at its richness, but that I saw scarce any inferior. I was no sooner left in it with Ellinor, than I gave free scope to the tears I had scarce been able before to suppress. My face was hid in her bosom, when the voice of Lord Leicester recalled me to myself. I dried my eyes, unwilling

unwilling even tacitly to reproach him: he entered through a private door, to change the cause of my grief to joy; for in his presence I hardly ever knew any other emotion; and the generous anxiety with which he entreated our pardon for the reception discretion had obliged him to order us, had something in it so graceful, so ardent, and tender, that all the pride of my heart subsided at once, and left it full of gratitude and affection.

We wished my sister a good night, and then passing through a dark passage, the whole length of the grand gallery, came into Lord Leicester's apartments, to which every place I ever saw was mean. He had a noble spirit, a splendid fortune, and an exquisite taste. He had greatly improved this ancient seat, the gift of Elizabeth: its finely chosen situation, elegant architecture, and superb furniture, made it the model of a thousand others. The beauties divided through the rest of the house in this apartment were united; and he gave a proof of the attention inseparable from real love, by omitting nothing

to

to embellish it, he had ever heard me commend. Ah, Madam! these are the mighty trifles that so exquisitely flatter a tender heart, and form its most perfect enjoyments.

T H E
R E C E S S, &c.

P A R T II.

THE communication between our apartments was a profound secret to all the servants but Le Val and Williams, my Lord's valet; in whose fidelity, after the late trial, he had the most perfect confidence. We were, to keep up the farce, presented to Lord Leicester the next day, who soon, by his growing distinction, taught Mrs. Hart and her daughters to observe a kind of deference in their behaviour to us. He ordered them to attend

tend us round the gardens and park, and not to fail shewing whatever was worth observation; and through what a beautiful variety did they lead us! a world in miniature! A magnificent lake presented itself, in whose clear bosom the trees were reflected, and round which the sheep and deer grazed on rich pasture: swans and water-fowls innumerable played on its surface, and an aight in the centre was made highly picturesque by several half-seen cottages, and emblems of agriculture. The late Lady Leicester needed not to have made a merit of remaining within these walls, since nature and art could furnish nothing lovely that was not enclosed here. Several gilded boats, and little vessels, danced on the bosom of the lake, and added, by the various streamers which played upon the surface, to the gaiety and richness of the prospect. When we turned the other way, the Gothic towers, swelling bastions, gigantic statues, and majestic sweep of the building, made that an object scarce less worthy of admiration.

All our allotted employment was to sing to Lord Leicester while at dinner; but as he frequently entertained the neighbouring Nobles and Gentlemen, a curtain of muslin was drawn over the balcony to screen us from observation. In the evening we sometimes fished on the lake; or Lord Leicester, to indulge in our company, joined in the concert we formed: every day brought with it some amusement, and the restraint we lived under, kept up, even in matrimony, all that delicacy, and spirit of affection, which is, by ease of mind, too apt to decay. At last, painful necessity obliged Lord Leicester to return to Court: he, however, would not leave me with more than one equal in the family, therefore directed that I should preside one month, and my sister the next; by this method, rendering it hard for them to fix on his favorite. We likewise, with the steward's daughters, wore one kind of habit, and busied ourselves in the working rich tapestry.

My

of My own happiness could never erase from my mind the opposite fate of the unhappy Queen who gave us birth. — She was then confined at a place not far distant from Kenilworth. I had already tried all my interest with Lord Leicester in her favour, without success; and so just was his noble inflexibility, that at the moment my heart was pierced by it, my reason admired it. “Another man, would he say, in attempting the release of the ill-fated Mary, would only forfeit his obedience, and endanger his life; and were those all; perhaps I should not be able to refuse my Matilda. “But remember, my love, to these I must add, the blackest treachery and ingratitude: it would be, viper like, stinging to death the generous heart that warmed me. Never employ the voice of virtue to charm me to vice; for what seems a duty in you, would be the worst of crimes in me; and what confidence could my wife have in my honor, if I was capable of betraying a partial Sovereign?”

I then would urge, my only wish was to restore my mother's liberty, which nothing but an unparalleled breach of confidence could have taken from her for eighteen years; observing, her crown had been lined with thorns too keen for her to desire to wear it again.

" Ah, my dear Matilda! he would cry, how ignorant are you of these terrible emotions, jealousy and revenge! permit me to know your mother's character better than yourself. She had too much pride and pleasure in reigning, to submit tamely to this imprisonment; or even supposing, tired of the evils always inseparable from a Crown, she could master her just resentment, and seeking an asylum with her children, ask only to die in peace, her relations would not suffer it. The ambition of the Guises is become a proverb; they would make use of her name and wrongs to shake the throne of Elizabeth; and instead of guarding the Queen, to whom I owed a perfect duty, I should have have the misery of seeing

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a terrible war devour my country, of which I was the cause. Who knows, my dear Matilda, if amidst these calamities my temper might preserve its equality? I might remember, with regret, the fatal advice which had misled me, and you might lament, too late, the sacrificing your own happiness to a fallacious hope of restoring your mother's.—Remember Elizabeth is now declining, the chances of life may bring about all you wish.—The compassion of the people has been kept alive for Mary these seventeen years; should we lose Elizabeth, her very imprisonment would turn to her advantage, by keeping her in the midst of a kingdom to which she is the lawful heir: my supposition is not vague, for the example of Elizabeth herself proves it very possible."

"What could I oppose to reasoning so just? I could only recommend the cause of my dear parent to him who can pull down the mighty and exalt the weak.

Every letter from my Lord was filled with complaints of the tediousness of the Court, and breathed the very soul of love.—He often intreated me to tell him I was happy; and when I complied, reproached me, through a tender caprice, for being so without him.—He required me to enumerate my hourly employments, and although half my time was spent in writing pacquets to him, always complained of the shortness of my letters. He, indeed, gave me no cause to retort; for it appeared as if he withdrew from the Court half of his hours to amuse me with all the little humorous incidents it continually furnished. But even these had not always the power to effect what he wished—my fate never allowed me one hour of perfect happiness, and an evil arose in his absence which filled me with the most terrible apprehensions.

My lovely sister, who was ever my pride and delight, possessed in a peculiar degree, that amiable gaiety which lessens the distance of rank. From her first introduction.

trodition at Kenilworth, she had given way to an increase of spirits, natural from such a change in our prospects, little foreseeing how great a danger might arise from it.—Williams had been raised by Lord Leicester to the superintendancy of the family on his returning to Court. He preferred this man, believing he would, from knowing me his Lady, take care I was treated with due respect. Williams had been a soldier, and had contracted the authoritative air annexed to petty officers, which made him in appearance peculiarly suited to the post assigned him.—I must confess he was never a favorite with me; nature had been unkind to him, and he had been more unkind to himself, in not softening her severity. He was beyond the meridian of life, his person coarsely made, his complexion swarthy, and his face much scarred; he had besides a fierceness of mien which hardly bent even to Lord Leicester, who, of all men, eminently possessed the art of inspiring as much respect as affection.

This man then, madam, marked out by nature, ventured to raise his eyes to the royal, the beautiful Ellinor—the sprightfulness of her manner abated his respect, and he had the insolence to declare his passion, call it honourable, and solicit her return. My sister had too much understanding not to feel her own fault, and too much pride to support his insolent freedom. She left him with ineffable disdain, as not worthy of a reply; and came directly to me—a pre-sentiment of some evil consequence arose in my mind at the moment she related the insult. I resolved to give Lord Leicester immediate notice of it, that he might take his measures accordingly, and in the mean while appeared constantly with my sister. But we had to manage a man equally artful and fearless. He had the consummate impudence to open my letter, and (finding its subject) detain it. In the mean time, no advice arriving from Lord Leicester in answer to mine, I remained on the rack of uncertainty; tormented by the confidence of a wretch from whom there was no possible escape, and

and uncertain even of the nature or extent of our danger. At last, unable, as the wife of Lord Leicester, to endure his insults, and tired of waiting my Lord's resolution, I took an opportunity of representing to him ~~the~~ the daring boldness of his conduct, in speaking of love to the sister of his Lord.

Without any emotion or confusion, he pleaded guilty to the charge, but artfully endeavoured to exculpate himself from presumption, by alledging the rank in which we appeared, and the supposition that we were raised from obscurity by his Lord; who of course could only enoble me.—At this insinuation, all the pride of Norfolk and Mary animated my features, yet fortunately recollecting myself, I replied with moderation; for the villain doubtless aimed at discovering from whom we really sprung, since our habitation had too probably struck him as containing a consequential secret.

I forbade him mildly ever to address my sister in that light again, without the approbation of my Lord, and attempted to retire;

retire; when stopping me, he bade me recollect that I talked to one possessed of more authority in the house than myself; that I likewise knew a secret of the utmost importance was in his power, and he was determined to make every use of it, in case I did not persuade my sister to accept him; that I must imagine him a fool by referring him to Lord Leicester; in short, instead of informing him, he was resolved to prevent his arriving at the knowledge of the affair, for which reason he had kept back all my last letters.

How cruel, madam, was my situation! alone, without any means of gaining protection from the remainder of my servants, except by declaring a secret he knew too well I would never reveal; to be thus braved, as well as insulted, was dreadful! I had yet no way of eluding him, since the whole family were under his governance, and had I offered to write to Lord Leicester through any other channel, I had the greatest reason to fear it would fall into his hands.

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By this terrible dilemma were the days of the wife of Lord Leicester embittered in the midst of affluence; in a spot which might be called the palace of pleasure.— Thus situated, I could only counteract treachery and art by the same. I appeared, after some reflection, alarmed at his threats, and more willing to forward his views: I exacted from him an oath not to betray my secret, and on my side solemnly vowed never to mention his, but to employ my interest with my sister in his favour:—We parted with mutual distrust, and an apparent reliance on each other's sincerity. I performed one part of my promise by conjuring Ellinor to deceive him with false hopes, till Lord Leicester's return gave me an opportunity of consulting him on the safest way of disposing the traitor. It was with much reluctance she consented, but it would have been a cruelty, unlike her character, to refuse to lighten an evil she was the innocent cause of. I had then only to find some means of letting my Lord know it without breaking my word: for once in my life I was

was guilty of duplicity, and, like Philocetes, found my equivocation furnished a terrible punishment. I wrote a letter, declaring the whole to Lord Leicester, which I kept in my bosom to give to him whenever he should return; in the mean time I wrote as usual, and delivered my letters to Williams. The profound silence I observed on this subject, probably inspired him with confidence, and although Ellinor refused to marry him directly, the point he aimed at, the complaisance with which we both treated him, lulled him at last into a perfect security.

Worn out with hourly complaints of this wretch's impertinence to my sister, and my fears of the event, I counted, with more than a lover's impatience, the days which must elapse before I could see Lord Leicester. At length the happy one arrived which brought him, and gave me at once joy and sorrow, for who could tell me all its consequences?—Fostered in a Court, where he knew but one superior, Lord Leicester had added a personal pride to that which naturally sprung from

from the nobility of his birth. The partiality of his Sovereign, who dispensed, through love, with his obedience, had prevented his learning to disguise his foibles; it was the business of every one to seem blind to them, by which means he was a favorite without being a hypocrite. Those who loved him well enough to allow for this error, and a vanity I can scarce term so, when I remember the various and numerous advantages he possessed, might do any thing with him. Impassioned, generous, good-natured, and noble, where once he was attached, his fortune, honor, nay life, would be risked for his friend; but the few who are worthy that name, too often confined his affections. Lord Leicester was too exalted perhaps to be loved. But I digress. Pardon me, Madam, when you consider the cause. This openness of heart gave me just reason to apprehend a guilty mind would read the indignant eye of my love, and induced me to suppress, for some days; the intended disclosure.

sure. My precaution succeeded; Williams knew the character of his Lord; and finding by the freedom and confidence he still testified, that I was true, began to rely on my word. A journey on which he was accidentally sent, assisted me highly, in leaving time for my Lord to cool. I laid the letter on his table one evening before I went to bed: Lord Leicester, who was in another room, came in after me, but had not half read it when he frightened me by his rage and indignation. Had the man been in the house I know not how the matter would have ended, but at length my tears and distress softened him; he passed two days after in a thoughtful manner; I knew not, nor ventured to ask him his resolutions: at the end of that time he regained his temper and composure; he saw the apprehensions lurking still in my heart, and bade me take courage, for he had found a way to quiet them for ever. I conjured him at least to conceal with caution his consciousness of the affair, which he promised, and

and in a great degree performed; but whether it was that knowing he was apprized of it made me fancy his manner would reveal it, I cannot say; certain it is, I never saw him look at or speak to this man afterwards, without feeling my heart sink within me.

Sir Francis Drake, at this time, formed all the conversation of England; he had fitted out a large fleet against the Spaniards, with which he was ready to sail from Plymouth. Many noblemen, and others, engaged as volunteers, and an infinite number of people assembled from all parts to view the fleet. Lord Leicester, who had always been a strong friend to Sir Francis, set out to take leave of him, and enlarged the train of domestics he usually travelled with, for the sake of appearing honorably among numbers who did not know him. So ardent was the desire of all ranks of people to partake the sight, that not a single male servant willingly staid behind.—Williams had so great a relish for these expeditions, that he asked my Lord to take him; Le Val's

sicknes

sickness keeping him at Kenilworth, Lord Leicester complied. A fortnight elapsed before they returned, during which poor old Alice expired: with her died one of the witnesses of my marriage: Father Anthony was still in good health, as James, who regularly came once a month, brought word.

—d50-03

Lord Leicester returned, and returned without Williams.—Struck to the heart, I had scarce strength to enquire what was become of him. My Lord asked me if I suspected him of having murdered the rogue? “ I have only sent him, ” added he, with a gay air, a long voyage, to teach him to keep a secret. I knew no other way of getting rid of the rascal. Sir Francis has undertaken to provide for him too effectually for my dear Matilda to know any further anxiety on his account: in short, he is shut up in a distant part of the vessel, the sailors are taught to consider him as a madman, and have neither time to listen to his tales, nor sense to understand them.—Thus, my dear love, our fears are entirely over.”

“ Rather

“ Rather begun,” I might have replied, for no rhetoric ever after charmed mine to rest.—A thousand accidents ruin our tranquillity, but it is better to endure their worst consequences, than return evil for evil. However necessary the step, the assuming a right to sentence this man, was too culpable in my eyes, not to make me uneasy; yet, since it certainly was to relieve me, that Lord Leicester executed the scheme, and because nothing could now recall it, I seemed satisfied: Ellinor too persuaded me to be so, from thinking the traitor justly punished.

Before Lord Leicester returned to Court, I gained his consent to a project I had long revolved; this was, to visit my mother—to have the joy of being held in her arms, and to be acknowledged by her blessing.—He was too anxious to indulge all my wishes, to refuse me in this instance; but, not being able to further it openly, he only gave me a sufficient sum of money to

bribe her keepers, and directed Le Val to attend us.

This man proved as faithful as Williams was the reverse—if at first he respected me but as the wife of his master, I afterwards gained an ascendant with him from my own conduct, which attached him to me as much as to his Lord, and made the most essential services seem trifles in his eyes. Eager to oblige and obey, he seemed always ready to fly before he knew whither, and a word of commendation was a sufficient recompence. He was now in the post of Williams, who was supposed to have voluntarily embarked with Sir Francis, and the secret of his fate remained with Lord Leicester, my sister, and myself.

Attended by Le Val, we set out for Coventry with beating hearts. We were to visit, not merely a mother, but an only parent, the sole person in whose arms we could claim a refuge; though now, alas, far more able vainly to offer her one. We were to see that Queen whose matchless beauty was her least ornament;

nement; to behold her graces withered by eighteen years confinement; to share in her afflictions, and prove how dearly the children, who had never known her, could love their mother.

But, alas! Madam, we were not permitted to realize these visions.—Le Val found her keepers too honest, or too fearful to suffer any stranger to converse with her, and the only privilege money could purchase, was that of seeing the Queen, through a grated window, take her morning-walk in a small garden. Overwhelmed with despair at this news, we yet embraced the only indulgence we could gain.—But, what did we not think that faithless woman deserved, who thus treated her equal, her relation, her friend! We were conducted to the window, where we were permitted to remain without attendants; we saw her come down the walk—but oh, how changed, and yet how lovely! Damp rooms had weakened her limbs—her charming arms were thrown round the necks of two maids, without whose assistance she could not move—a pale

resignation sat on her still beautiful features: her regal mien could not be eclipsed by a habit of plain purple, nor her fine hair by the veil which touched her forehead.—Her beads and crofs were her only ornaments, but her unaffected piety, and patient sufferance, mingled the Saint with the Queen, and gave her charms beyond humanity. Our emotions were too rapid and strong for description; we wept—we incoherently exclaimed—and striking ourselves eagerly against the bars, seemed to hope some supernatural strength would break them. More afflicted at seeing her thus, than not seeing her at all, I neither could behold her for my tears, or resolve to lose a look by indulging in them.—She drew near the spot where we stood, when our hands, which we had thrust, in supplication, through the bars, caught her attention.—She raised her fine eyes, with their usual divine composure, to the window—I would have spoke, but my lips denied all utterance. Alas! that blessed—that benignant glance, was the first, the last, the only

only one we ever received from a mother,—When she withdrew her eyes, she carried my very soul with her; all my strength failed at once, and I sunk in a swoon in my sister's arms.

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Suspicions of this nature made it dangerous for my Lord, were we frequently to appear there; yet this momentary view had awakened sensations, which, though less strong than love, were equally lasting, and which empoisoned my hours in the bosom of happiness. Bitter tears upon the cheeks of my Leicester, when with fond endearment he would strain me to his heart, alone spoke my thoughts, and I sacrificed the less to the greater duty.—Ellinor, my dear Ellinor, was, on this theme, my only counsellor, and we spent days in forming a thousand projects; weeping every evening at discovering their impracticability. The frequent absences of my Lord, left me too much leisure for this melancholy employment;

yet the ardor of his passion made him chuse every opportunity, however short, to be with me, and I trembled lest these incessant journeys should attract the notice of Elizabeth, who had been for some time indisposed, and of course more alive to any inattention of her favorite. But Lord Leicester had not been used to controul, and sometimes imputed hints to indifference which arose from the most generous motives, for my life was without any enjoyment in his absence, but the hope of seeing him again. When he was away, I wandered wearily through every room, and saw only a magnificent solitude: but, whenever he appeared, joy and music animated the whole family; every apartment seemed to have found its guest, and every servant the happy subject of his duty.

To excuse his frequent absences to the Queen, my Lord avowed a passion for hunting, with which his conduct so little agreed, that he shut himself up in Kenilworth Castle, and seldom passed beyond his own walls. Conscious this must in time be observed,

I learnt

1 learnt to ride expertly, and often obliged him to accompany us in mere prudence. 2 To prevent our being too much fatigued, my Lord generally ordered a tent to be pitched, with refreshments, in the forest; and one morning, finding myself ill, I quitted the chace almost directly, and went in search of our resting place, guided by a huntsman, as ignorant of it as ourselves. 3 Among the closest and most intricate paths we encountered a gentleman on horseback, attended by many servants; to make way for us, he ordered his servants to return, and dismounting, bowed, and remained uncovered while we passed. --- Addressing the man who attended us, he eagerly enquired for my 2 Lord --- the question, I knew not why, alarmed me; I turned instantly to examine his features, and my horse continuing his pace, struck my head against an arm of a tree with so much violence, that the reins dropt from my hand, and the stranger was just quick enough to catch me. I fainted: one of his train opened a ~~bowreido~~ ^{bowreido} ^{O 4. 1. 210.} vein

vein in my arm, which instantly revived me, and I found myself in the stranger's arms, who pressed, with more than common concern, the hand he held. Confused and perplexed with this accident, I endeavoured in vain to withdraw it, and seeing my hair had fallen in its usual ~~curls~~ over my neck, looked about for my hat, which yet hung on the bough that struck me. Regardless of every intreaty, I persisted in mounting my horse, and returning instantly, after I had rendered him every acknowledgment his active politeness merited. He replied with such peculiar grace and gallantry, as gave me a great desire to know who he was, but his pursuing me with his eyes, rendered it impossible for some time: after which the huntsman informed me he was the nephew of Lord Leicester, Sir Philip Sydney. His appearance confirmed the agreeable impression made by his character, and I only regretted being introduced to him by a vexatious accident which seemed too much to possess his mind. Engrossed by these re-

reflections, although I lay down, it was impossible to close my eyes, when the abrupt entrance of my Lord roused me completely. Extreme vexation and disorder marked his air, and without the least enquiry into my hurts, he threw himself into a chair by me, and lamented the malice of his fortune. Alarmed beyond measure, I started from the bed, and kneeling at his feet, conjured him to tell me in what new instance he had reason to complain.---“Matilda, said he, fixing his eyes on me with a sad intentness, the Queen approaches.”---My heart died within me at the words; his supporting arms alone saved me from falling to the ground, and his caresses from fainting.

“I know her well, continued he, and have every reason to fear we are betrayed. The subtilty of approaching without an express, convinces me that she suspects at least some charm in Kenilworth I dare not vow. I had always purposed, in compliance alike with my promise and my safety,

safety, to convey you to the Recess in case this event happened ; but now I fear the appearance it will have, alike to my own servants and Sydney's companions, who are all of the Queen's train, and but too much struck with your beauty.—One expedient alone remains—tell me, my love, may your Leicester hope to triumph over your becoming pride, your just resentment?—Will you condescend to appear before Elizabeth in the same humble light in which you have hitherto appeared ; and, forgetting awhile she has been the persecutor of your family, will you consider her only as the patroness of your husband?"

" I will forget every thing, cried I, in a transport of tenderness, which interferes with your safety and satisfaction: too happy in having something to sacrifice in proof of my love, I will be whatever you wish—as the daughter of Mary, my soul rises against Elizabeth ; but, as the wife of Leicester, I ought to know no pleasure except his ; nor have I had, till this

this alarming moment, a merit in submission."

"What are the ties of marriage, said my Lord, (the tears mingling on our cheeks) to these invisible ligaments of the soul ! I can so little bear to be surpassed in generosity, that I can hardly refrain from leading you to the Queen as her hostess, and charming the court with the sight of a wife, who is my sole pride and everlasting pleasure."

"Precious, inestimable moment of my life, when the warmth of my heart was so fully displayed, so gloriously answered ! —Ah, Madam, Lord Leicester had the rare secret of governing a generous mind.

The same considerations prevailed on Ellinor to give the same consent, and the short hour previous to the Queen's arrival was spent by us in schooling our eyes and hearts, lest the spirit of the injured and pride of the noble should betray all.--- Apprehensive too, lest the similitude my features bore to those of my unfortunate mother, might strike some idle observer,

I de-

I departed from her mode of dress, and letting my hair curl more over my face and neck, enwreathed it fancifully with flowers; then mixing with the villagers in habits resembling theirs, we waited to usher the Queen into the great hall, by strewing that and the inner court with aromatic herbs.

The amazing hurry produced by this unexpected visit, had not subsided, when the cannon proclaimed the approach of Elizabeth. A faint sickness came over me; my limbs were scarce able to support my weight, and my eyes hardly served to guide my steps. My nature shuddered at her, and the spirit of Norfolk trembled proudly within me. Most fortunately confounded with the gay cavalcade, I soon had performed my task, and retired without once fixing my eyes on her face. I struggled much with myself, and regained a tolerable share of composure ere her dinner was served, at which we were, as usual, to sing. Concealed from the public gaze, I had now an opportunity

portunity of examining the Queen. She was talking to my Lord, who waited behind her chair. Though the features of Elizabeth, retained nothing of her mother's ^{own} sweetness, ^{but} ²¹⁹ they were regular; her eyes were remarkably small, but so clear and quick, they seemed to comprehend every thing with a single glance; the defect in her shape taking off all real Majesty, she supplied that deficiency by an extreme haughtiness; a severe, satirical smile marked her countenance, and an absurd gaiety her dress. I could not but suppose foreigners would imagine that Queen owed much of her reputation to her counsellors, who could disgrace her venerable years by a bare neck, and a false head of hair made in the most youthful fashion. Yet, under other circumstances, the scene would have been charming. The hall enriched and adorned with fine statues, tapestry, and purple fringed with gold, the high arched Gethick windows, which, being thrown open, gave a beautiful view of the lake, covered with newly ornamented boats, struck the Queen with admiration; while

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the immense crowd of royal attendants, and above all, the profound respect of many of the nobles, were sights no less new to me. I turned my eyes round to discover if among them I could find any to compare with Lord Leicester. Where, ah where! could they select his equal! suppress anxiety gave a redoubled glow to his cheek, and his expressive eyes pierced through the veil which hid us from all others. Dinner removed, the music began. The usual pieces played, a silence ensued only interrupted by my voice and the lute of my sister. Amazement seemed to transfix every beholder, and all eyes pursued the bent of Lord Leicester's.— The Queen dropt a peach she was paring, and speaking with warmth to Sydney, he replied with an air so enlivened as shewed his heart was in the subject. Scarce had I reached the conclusion of the air, when the curtain was drawn aside, by the officious Sydney, and we stood exposed to the view of the whole court. Overwhelmed with a thousand sensations, I dropt the book I sung from, and Ellinor

bent over her lute with a beautiful modesty. The various exclamations of the noblemen might have flattered our vanity, had we not been continually told any thing can make, to courtiers, the wonder of an hour. That fatal moment was sure the critical one of my life; it awakened dangerous suspicions in the soul of Elizabeth: endless anxiety in the man in whom my life was bound up, and a passion in the heart of another, the cold hand of death alone could extinguish. I mean the amiable Sydney: charmed at finding in the person who charmed the whole court, those features indelibly impressed on his memory, he delivered himself entirely up to his predilection with a generous warmth.

The moment I could recollect myself, I considered the Queen attentively; she sat in the pensive position into which our appearance had thrown her; sometimes surveying us with deep observation, then, with a keener glance, Lord Leicester. I laboured to support the painful examination with composure, but the care defeated

feated itself, and involuntary blushes covered my face, as often as I became the object of her attention. The indifference the Queen expressed towards the music, obliged every one else to be silent on the subject, and we soon obtained permission to retire. Sydney, who was the messenger, overwhelmed us with apologies for the share he had in our confusion, although by the command of his sovereign. I had perpetual reason for resenting his officiousness, but Sydney was not born to be hated. To exalted generosity, and the most manly courage, he joined elegance, refinement, and a temper superior to events. Yes, gallant Sydney, this noble justice Matilda owes thy virtues!—of all her misfortunes, that of becoming thine touched her most deeply.—Our apparent state of dependence never once induced Sir Philip to forfeit that respect a man of merit owes to himself;----it only united to the politeness universally due to the sex, an affecting deference which dignified its object. A husband less adored, than Lord Leicester, might with reason

have dreaded such a rival—Midnight alone gave us the freedom of comparing opinions, and I saw with unspeakable regret, the peace of my Lord destroyed during this visit. A depression, he could hardly account for, filled up the intervals we passed together; and instead of employing them in forming any reasonable plan, nothing remained of all our mutual tenderness but silence, sighs, and tears.

Elizabeth, in defiance of time and understanding, indulged a romantic taste inconsistent with either; and, not satisfied with real pre-eminence, affected to be deified by the flattery of verse. The Lady of the Lake was the title she chose to be known by here, and nothing art could invent, or wealth procure, was wanting to render the various pageants complete. A boat scooped like a shell, and enclosing a throne, conveyed her to the aight, where I and many more, habited like Nereids, waited to receive her, and ushering her to a grotto inlaid with shells and looking-glass, we presented her,

in baskets made of sea weed, pearl, cora-
amber, and every jewel of the water
while the place resounded with panegy-
rics so labored and misapplied, that it
was with difficulty we forebore smiling at
the gravity with which she listened to
them.

I found, with surprize, Lord Leicester
feared the eyes of every indifferent spec-
tator would penetrate through a mystery,
Elizabeth only had an interest in deve-
loping. It is the common weakness of
humanity to bend the attention solely to
minute objects, while the leading ones
come upon us totally unawares.----I, on
the contrary, fancied myself every mo-
ment surveyed with a harsh air by an in-
flexible imperial rival.---Every lady of the
court, under the pretext of seeking our
intimacy, continually sounded Klinor
and myself on our real condition, and the
timid incoherent manner in which we an-
swered, gave me the most mortal fears of
their employer.—Abject slaves to the
Queen's amusement, she kept us conti-
nually

nually in her sight, and without deigning to open her own lips, seemed to tempt us to complain by eternal whims.—In those moments, love, shame, and apprehension, spoke a language intelligible in all countries in the features of Lord Leicester; and Elizabeth, having doubtless assured herself, by these artifices, that there must be something to reveal, left her train at one end of the gallery, and retiring to the other with my Lord, interrogated him, as I instantly conjectured.—The fate of my mother now arose more strongly to my mind. “Ah! why, thought I, did I leave the happy solitude in which she placed me, only to ruin the object of my affections, and deliver myself up to an inexorable tyrant, who can now wreak her malice without even being suspected?” While thus lost to the surrounding crowd, I observed my Lord reply to her eager questions with hesitation and anxiety; as he talked, he fixed his eyes on me with the uneasy air of a person who wishes to convey through them what he is hopeless

of making you comprehend any other way. I resolved to prevent an error on my part, by a timely retreat; when suddenly speaking aloud, Lord Leicester advanced towards us:—“Mark well all I say,” said he, in a whisper, leading me and my sister to the seat of the Queen,—“I shall more surprise these children, said he, with the knowledge of their origin than your Majesty—it is needless to give them the reasons I have laid before you for this secrecy; it must be sufficient honor and pleasure for them to find themselves daughters of the house of Dudley, and objects of their Sovereign’s gracious patronage.” Seeing him bend his knee, ours, stubborn and reluctant as they were, gave way, and we kissed the fatal hand she majestically tendered. She informed us, she added us to her train of maids of honor, and should carry us with her on the morrow towards London.—Lord Leicester, charmed with having eluded all her suspicions, dreamt not of the snare he had wound round his own heart in yielding us up to Elizabeth, whose consummate art had

had induced her to give credit to a most improbable fiction, on purpose to place us beyond his reach, which she could no other way have effected.

The hour of rest enabled him to open all his heart.—I understood that Elizabeth had addressed him in so decisive a manner on the conviction of our being born above our present rank, that he could not hope to save us from the most menial degradations but by a false confidence; Heaven had suddenly inspired him with the idea of a possibility, that his brother, the Lord Guilford, might have married Lady Jane Grey, a twelvemonth ere the two politic Dukes of Suffolk and Northumberland thought it prudent to appear leagued; during which time, he declared the unfortunate Lady Jane gave birth to us both: the same policy had induced them to conceal this event till the Suffolk family should be established on the throne, and that hope being for ever defeated, prudence still buried us in oblivion;—finally, that the secret rested now only in his own bosom, from whence his at-

tachment to Elizabeth would never suffer it to transpire, and that if the Queen still wished to patronize us, he thought it would be prudent to let us imagine ourselves his own illegitimate daughters.— To all this Elizabeth replied little, but suffering him to settle it his own way, persisted only in taking us from him.

Her mode of conduct convinced me at once that she utterly discredited the whole of this fiction; which placed us, by another branch, almost as near to the throne as we really stood. Would not a jealous, sullen foul, like hers, have demanded dates, names, testimonials and witnesses? Would she not have made us undergo the fate of Lady Catherine, the legal heir of the house of Suffolk, whom, by a barbarous, un feminine use of power, she had torn from the most near and sacred of human ties, and condemned, even in the bloom of youth, to a solitary life of imprisonment, only for having dared to become a wife and mother? --- Would not, in a word, all the fury of her temper have blazed

blazed forth, but that she meditated a more safe and silent ruin ?

Unwilling to add to the anguish of this moment by one surmise, I threw myself into his arms, and silent, speechless, strained him to my heart---supplicating, mentally, that God who alone could protect us. No language could have affected Lord Leicester like this conduct.---He accused himself of having meanly considered his own safety; and we were obliged repeatedly to assure him, that we thought he had acted with the most consummate judgment, ere we could reconcile him to himself. "Surely Matilda thinks me a sufficient sufferer, cried he, in losing the charm of her society?---Can I have forgotten, that I dare no longer indulge even my eyes with her beauty? ---Can I have forgotten that all other men may freely adore her, and that her happiness is not more in the power of Elizabeth than mine is in hers? ---Did I not know that the Queen would willingly punish her whole race with the celibacy she imposes on herself, I should doubt her pro-

teeting the pretensions of Sydney; but ~~she~~ dreads too much multiplying claims to the crown, and I alone shall be persecuted with his passion---Pity my situation, added he, and with a uniform coldness, dash his presumptuous hopes.--- How do I lament the fate which involves the fair Ellinor in calamities the same motives cannot reconcile her to! but since her choice and affections led her into the world, I rely upon her generous soul to support its evils with prudence and patience. -- This will be our last conversation for some time---one only caution let me recommend to you both---make no confidants, cultivate the friendship of Lady Pembroke, and never forget that you constantly act under the eye of a haughty, jealous, and revengeful Sovereign."

Needless admonition! Could a daughter of the Stuart line cease to dread and hate Elizabeth?--- Could a wife too, who saw the life of the man she loved depended on her prudence, for one moment dare to shew she did so?

Condemned to mingle with the world,
I entered it with presages so melancholy
as shewed my future fortune.---Without
daring to testify my grief, even by a look,
I departed from that hospitable mansion
in which I had vainly promised myself
long years of unspeakable happiness.---I
departed without my Lord, and in so doing
experienced every misery of love and
dependance. -- Ah ! how weak are those
wretches who look up to us with wonder,
cried I, mentally, as we passed through
every town, did ye know the breaking
heart this splendid garb covers !---did ye
feel the galling chain which writhes round
it, and deepens my cheek with destructive
beauty, how would you bless the gracious
God who gives you peace and ignorance !

Received, acknowledged, and admired,
we soon became familiar appendages to
Elizabeth ; nor had we any hopes of see-
ing our bondage end but with her life.
It was not the least of my evils that I in-
volved my Ellinor in this calamity, which
love of me could alone render supporta-
ble.

ble. By a caprice for which there is no accounting, Elizabeth, whose eyes were ever watchful, and heart suspicious, bent both for ever on Ellinor; who endured from her, with silent indignation, a thousand passionate extravagancies. Contrary to Lord Leicester's idea, I plainly perceived she encouraged every pretender to either, obviously to develope the mystery she easily discerned through his false confidence.---Tortured with the passion of Sir Philip, I found all my rigor could not extinguish hopes the Queen patronized, while Lord Leicester's confidence seemed to contract, in proportion as it became difficult for me to partake it.

The fair Pembroke attached herself particularly to Ellinor, and Rose Cecil, Lord Burleigh's second daughter, professed an unbounded friendship for me. I had so great a deference to the command of my Lord, as to withhold mine, till time convinced me too feelingly, that she was incapable of abusing it. She was almost a stranger at Court as well as ourselves,

and

and brought up under a mother who abhorred it; the death of that mother leaving her to the care of an ambitious father, he flattered himself her beauty would win her a husband of merit, ere she had gained courage to assert her own choice. He was not mistaken in the first opinion: the tender bloom both of her mind and person, attached to her a thousand hearts, but though in all other instances compliance itself, in the article of marriage, she refused to obey even the Queen, who consequently hated her. This sad conformity of situation, both were at liberty alike to lament, and with the candor incident to youth, I found it difficult to limit my lamentations. Our situations and tempers made us alike cultivate an attachment with Lady Arundell, Sir Philip's eldest sister, who had long since retired to a seat of his on the banks of the Thames, upon the imprisonment of her Lord. With less shining qualifications than her more fair and fortunate sister, Lady Arundell possessed a Roman strength of soul. Beloved from childhood by Eli-

Elizabeth, she might have remained a favorite, even while her husband was a victim, but she inexorably insisted on sharing his prison, and when it soon after became his grave, retired in an honourable poverty, and owed her little income to her brother's bounty --- Thus, in innocence and hallowed widowhood, passed the days of this amiable woman, who now enjoyed that first and last of human pleasures, the seeing herself surrounded with friends, although she had only merit to attach them.

The resentment of Philip the second of Spain broke forth at this period, and employed every one's thoughts ; more especially the Queen's, with whom love was ever so subordinate a consideration, that I flattered myself Lord Leicester would chuse this opportunity to plan our future meetings, and a little relieve me from the insupportable tortures of perpetual hypocrisy. When now, to complete my evils, he for whom I renounced every distinction due to my sex and birth, he in whom my soul was treasured, regarded me

me with coldness and disdain. I examined my own heart. It did not make me a single reproach; but the knowing I was wronged could not restore my peace. I began to dread that satisfied love had given place to ambition; that considering me as the only bar between himself and Elizabeth (who became more and more gracious to him) he vainly regretted he had made me so—My hatred to the Queen redoubled, although she treated me much better than my sister, as she always conceived Ellinor his favorite, because the vehicle of his sentiments to me: yet, though his displeasure was strongly marked, it did not spring from indifference; for at the same time he carefully avoided my conversation, he incessantly watched my actions, and was always in my view, without ever being in my reach.—It was impossible not to discern he must be jealous; but alas, suspicion soon makes the causes it seeks. My blushes and the disorder of my air, when any supposed lover addressed me, confirmed his fatal prejudice;

and

and the impossibility of finding an opportunity to acquit myself, almost distracted me. Fortune, shortly after, added the only aggravation my fate admitted:

The fair Rose Cecil, whose attachment I have mentioned, had insensibly engaged my affections by the warmth of her own. The pleasure I took in discoursing about my Lord, made me overlook for a time, that she was equally unwearyed of the topic; but the eager manner in which she revived it, while increasing sorrow buried his name in my heart, at last opened my eyes. I observed her more closely, I saw the strong affection which impelled her to be near to him, while her heightened colour, and universal agitation, whenever he addressed her, made the secret inclination of her heart but too obvious. There are wives who would have seized this occasion to retort, but she was so innocent I could not distrust her, and was above appearing to do so. Some imaginary flight overcame a mind so delicate, and one evening she indulged in her tears, and unsoothed her whole heart. In

vain, she said, did years and circumstances divide her from Lord Leicester, since she took more pleasure in silently admiring him, than in being admired by the whole world----“ Ah, madam, cried she, how barbarous are hereditary hatreds! Exert yourself for me, dearest Matilda, divest my Lord’s mind of so narrow a prejudice, assured that this obligation will double an attachment equally produced by your own merit and the family you sprung from.”

What a proposal was this to a wife---to a wife, did I say? alas, to a lover---a wild and extravagant lover!----She embraced me, and hid her tears and agitations on my bosom----a bosom which struggled with agonies yet more trying. Affected alike with her innocence and her fate, I returned her caresses, and wept like a mother over her child.----She left me sufficient leisure to consider my answer; I told her, in pitying, I shewed her all the kindness in my power, since the little influence I had with my Lord was obvious enough.

enough. I hinted that hers must ever be a hopeless attachment, as the visible distinction of the Queen made it very improbable Lord Leicester should marry any other woman, not to mention the vast disparity between her years and his.

She replied, that she had considered this over so often, that she had reconciled herself to every article.----The Queen thought more of war than marriage, and surely if Lord Leicester could be brought to do justice to her heart, her youth would never be considered as a fault.

In short, I easily understood that what she wished she was resolved to hope. I dropped the subject, but it was with infinite chagrin I beheld this lovely girl encourage a passion, so many causes concurred to render hopeless. In fact, it did not long escape the Queen's notice, and the unfortunate Rose saw every body appear to be acquainted with her weakness; but its object, who shew'd a kindness towards her, almost amounting to dislike; to me she always flew for consolation, and I

fre-

equently administered that I could not stand.

On so important an event as the expected invasion, the English were all prepared to take arms : Lord Leicester, as their leader, was already encamped ; and I parted with him in common with the other Courtiers, without the liberty of uttering a syllable that might give peace to his heart or my own. The misery of my situation became intolerable, when fear of my Lord's safety was added to every other fear, and I resolved on an explanation, whatever the consequence. The natural ascendancy love and superior years gave him over me when present, vanished with him : I intreated him to suffer me by knowing to repair an involuntary fault, and before it was too late, recover an affection I could not long survive. I conjured him to remember that he was my all in this life, and that if he continued to withhold his confidence, I could only conclude he repented the having ever bestowed it ; and should finally give up all care of a being,

which was no longer dear to me than while it was so to him.

The equivocal turn of these expressions I thought would secure this letter, even if intercepted, from producing any evil consequence; and while dubious how to convey it, Sir Philip Sydney demanded permission to take leave of me:—not even the pangs I suffered through his love, could rob him of my regard—the dis-
guising it was all in my power. To his care I committed this letter, assured he might be trusted even with the truth; and transported with the least mark of my confidence, he promised all that lovers usually premise.

No sooner was he gone, than I remembered the ill-chosen messenger might render Lord Leicester insensible to the contents of a letter blistered with my tears.— Alas! when once we enter the labyrinth of possibilities, to which jealousy is the fatal sentinel, hardly ever can we extricate ourselves. The gentle consolations of Ellinor were all my fate had left me; but

But for her, sickness must have been the consequence of sorrow: but during the hours of retirement (for one apartment held us) she omitted nothing to sooth or strengthen my mind: — incomparable sister! what a soul was thine! Oh! why were tears my only tribute to thy boundless generosity?

At length Lord Brook arrived express from the camp, and took the first opportunity to deliver me a letter from my Lord. He said I had found means to convert the accuser into the criminal, and conjured me to pardon a mean jealousy, which punished itself. My too ready obedience to the Queen's command, he added, and the obvious pleasure I appeared to find in his nephew's conversation, had poisoned every moment of his life since I came to Court. Sydney's talents, his equal years, his generous disposition, all conspired to make him a formidable rival. "I am not meanly jealous of your person, continued he — no, Matilda, it is your heart of which I am a miser; nor

do I wish you mine, whatever your loss may cost me, longer than you wish yourself so. Under the cruel circumstances imposed on us, less might excusably alarm a heart which has so severely suffered for its candor; yet, too just in my nature to consider that as your fault, which must have proved our mutual misfortune, I resolved to bury in my bosom its killing suggestions, and cease to persecute you with a passion which you dared not repel, however reluctant your heart. But that which would have made a common mind jealous, has eradicated the weakness from mine; for nothing but spotless innocence could have made you chuse out my imaginary rival as the vehicle of your sentiments. Truth and conviction flash upon my bewildered senses, and love breathes through every invaluable line of your dear letter.—How, how shall I ever recompence you for my injustice?—I can no longer live without humbling myself at your feet, and receiving a pardon I fear I shall never deserve. I have at length resolved to confide

confide our secret to Lady Arundell—sorrow and experience have surely taught her discretion. Her house is the only retired one to which you can come with safety. Appear indisposed, and the Queen will not suspect more in the request of passing some time with my niece, than that of being unable to support the hurry and fatigue of the times. I will prepare Lady Arundell for your reception, and snatch the first moment consistent with my duty to fly and enliven your solitude. The embrace that confirmed you mine was less dear to me, than that which will seal your forgiveness. — Oh ! my love, ended he, who could endure the tortures of doubt, were not the moment of reconciliation so exquisite a transport !”

Ah, true indeed ! for all the pleasures of my life faded before that moment ! I seemed to tread in air, and had hardly command enough of myself to affect languor and sickness. Elizabeth, who always found herself fatigued with indisposition, because not subject to it herself,

readily consented to my spending a month with Lady Arundell, who received me with infinite pleasure. I found she ~~had~~ been apprized of my marriage only, ~~and~~ that my Lord still withheld the secret of my birth. She allotted me a magnificent apartment, which concluded with a saloon opening to the Thames. This noble room was embellished with valuable paintings, some of which were not yet finished, and a painter of eminence frequently attended to complete them. This man was employed by her to take a picture of me, which might fill up the interval of my Lord's absence, as well as agreeably surprise him. While one day dressed gaily for this purpose, and waiting in the saloon, I perceived the man enter, but how was I surprised to see him a moment after at my feet! I turned indignantly towards him; Ah, heavens! it was my Lord, my Leicester himself! who safe in that disguise, which he and Lady Arundell had agreed on, was to forbid the painter whenever he could visit us with safety. We learnt from him news of the utmost importance, that

that Heaven itself had fought for Elizabeth, and defeated an armada her power could ill have coped with. This intelligence, by securing Lord Leicester, joyed even my heart; and the pride of forgiving being added to the pleasure of loving, life could bestow no more on me.

I had now learnt to be beforehand with suspicion; and as Sir Philip, charmed with the opportunity of seeing me out of the chilling circle of a Court, was almost a daily visitor, I resolved to end his hopes, even at the risque of an implied confidence. I could hardly sometimes forbear weeping to see him thus pursuing a shadow, and wasting a glorious youth.— Oh Sydney! you was worthy of a better fate, and could I accuse myself of embittering yours, I should be a wretch indeed!---but no, I honored, revered, admired you; nay, had I not already exchanged my heart, it must have been yours—you, whom so many women have loved, and none, no none were ever known to hate.

Having formed my resolution, I permitted him one day to lead me to the terrace. Overjoyed with the distinction, he entertained me with a thousand pleasant fallies.—Ah! is there a more pungent sensation in nature, than the necessity fortune sometimes imposes on generous minds to afflict each other? I opened my lips—the truth hovered on them—but it was not till he himself tenderly pressed me to add language to my expressive looks, and confide to him the sentiments I had endeavoured to suppress, that I could speak. “Alas! Sir Philip, cried I, why am I reduced to tell you, your merit and your attachment are by a combination of events my only misfortunes?”

“What do you utter, Madam? cried he,---is this possible?---

“A painful truth, returned I, which the highest esteem for you could alone extort.---I am sensible of the influence of Elizabeth, but believe me, I am among those who cannot obey her”

“Obey her! returned he; does the fair Matilda know so little of me, as to imagine

gine I would owe her hand to regal authority? --- No, Madam, Sydney would not on such terms, he may proudly say, deign to accept even yourself. While my passion was only my own misfortune, I thought myself at liberty to indulge it; but the moment it becomes yours, pride, honor, sensibility, all ordain eternal silence. Yet, surely, added he, in an affecting tone, a heart like mine might hope to know the fatality which thus wounds it."

" By the love you have professed for me, cried I, seizing his hand in turn with energy; by the honor which actuates you towards every human being, I conjure you press no farther into a secret I have no right to reveal---if I had——

" if you had! --- ah! lovely, generous, candid Matilda---no, I will *not* invade any mystery you think it necessary to conceal. Since my hard fate deprives my youth of its sole charm and hope---yet surely time ---may I hope nothing from time? ---age would steal upon me unobserved

observed were you but to allow me expectation."

" Why, why, cried I, weeping, am I compelled to a half confidence in a heart so noble! --- but be assured, Sir Philip, time can never unite us by any other bonds than those of esteem; and surely, every day must strengthen those."

" I think I understand you, replied he, fixing his eyes on mine with a melancholy firmness, --- and shall I expose you to the ungoverned passions of the Queen? --- no, since I am never---since esteem is to be the only bond between us --- he paused, and kneeling kissed both hands, as if taking an everlasting leave --- when next you see me---though I wring every fibre of this heart --- when next you see me, I will feel intitled to all your esteem."

Rising, he quitted me, and walked towards his barge, with sad and irresolute steps, frequently looking back as if he was ready to return, and recant his declaration: but the barge swiftly conveying him toward London, I gave free vent to the

the tears I had with infinite difficulty suppressed.

The following evening Lord Leicester had promised to pass with us : he arrived with an air of satisfaction it was impossible I could avoid sharing, even while ignorant of its cause. “ Who would rely on the constancy of a lover, said he, with a happy smile, since even my Matilda’s charms could not retain my nephew’s attachment ! He has solicited the Queen’s consent to marry Miss Walsingham ; you know her love for him, but his sudden return of it, amazes all acquainted with both. Elizabeth calls him a whimsical fool, but does not care to offend Sir Francis by refusing her consent, however displeased at his thus matching himself—the marriage will be celebrated in a few days, and my Matilda is invited to her rival’s triumph.”

Ah no, I should have returned, had his jealousy not taught me caution, thy Matilda has a triumph of her own to enjoy Alas, I now understood Sydney’s parting words, and my heart floated in tears

tears tinctured so strongly with every sentiment but love, that I could hardly distinguish whether that had not a share in the sublimity of the moment.

My Lord pressed me to return to Court previous to the ceremony; he even gave out that I meant to do so, and this I only understood by a line which accompanied the formal invitations sent to me and Lady Arundell. "Ah, Madam, added Sir Philip, in the postscript, is it true that you return ere my sacrifice is compleated?"

"No, I will not return, sighed I, my husband's claims extend no farther, and humanity resumes its rights."

* * * * *

The dread that malicious observer might once more pry into Lord Leicester's moments of retirement, at last conquered the reluctance I felt at returning to Court. I saw, in defiance of danger, self indulgence continually increased upon him. At first, a few hours of the evening were all he devoted to me and Lady Arundell

Arundell; shortly after he came later and passed the night: he then pleaded fear of disgracing one or the other, and lost whole days.—“Couldst thou wonder thy former marriage was discovered? said I often to myself, after exhausting all my rhetoric in vain to drive him from me.—Oh Leicester! what was the wrath of Elizabeth then, to that she would feel could she explore the whole of this secret?” I entreated Ellinor to write me word my absence was much remarked, and at last returned once more a voluntary victim.

A sad and silent admiration was the only expression of my features at the sight of Sir Philip; he sighed at the compliment indispensably due, which his bride received with cold contempt. To a countenance naturally harsh and inquisitive, however beautiful, Miss Walsingham had always united a temper, proud, passionate, and peevish. Her strong attachment to Sir Philip, had in all instances, where he was concerned, subdued for a time, or, veiled these failings. He could not be ignorant

ignorant of a passion he had so often been rallied upon, and the moment he found it was not possible for him to make his own choice, he generously resolved to indulge hers. His motives could not be doubted, as all the Court knew she had no fortune, and every body saw it was in her power to become the happiest of women.----But alas, it was not in her nature—far from seeking to win upon his heart, by a silent indulgence of all his little foibles, she wearied him with importunate fondness, and whenever busines or weariness drove him from home, employed the interval in fomenting violent passions, with which the seidom failed to overwhelm him on his return. Incapable of bending so noble a mind to the little triumph of conquering a low one, and as incapable of regulating his life by the narrow rules she would have laid down for him, he saw no alternative but the pursuit of glory, and solicited to be sent to his government of Flushing.

“ Oh, pardon me, beloved Leicester, the bitter tears I have so often shed for the gallant Sydney.—Why, why had he not chosen my sister? She was free, she had a hand, a heart, a person worthy his; she would have crowned his days with happiness and his grave with honor. Alas, in the weak pride of humanity we seek to new model the distinctions of nature, and insolently oppose our limited faculties to omniscience.

New disturbances in the Netherlands, now obliged Lord Leicester, as commander in chief, to accompany his nephew. I saw them both depart, with a reluctance so extreme as foreboded some calamity. The generous Sydney understood my silence, my conflicts, my wishes. “ Rely on my cares—rely on my honor, said he at parting, and be assured, my breast must be cold as the earth which then will cover it, ere that feels one wound which lodges the fair Matilda’s heart.—Oh, let me worship the wise ordination of Providence! If amidst all the evils

fate

fate and imprudence have overwhelmed me with, I still weakly feel a regret at pronouncing a last adieu, what must I have endured had I been the chosen! but why by such remembrance disturb her I love!—Yet dear is the sensibility, adored Matilda—Oh let the tears which now enrich your cheeks, be wholly Sydney's!"

And they were wholly Sydney's! A sad presentiment heightened the anguish of this parting, by telling me we never more should meet. It remains not for my weak pen to paint the heroic death of Sir Philip Sydney; it has employed the noblest. Even envy and malice dropt involuntary tears, while friendship was exhausted in vain lamentations. As to me, I set no bounds to my sorrow, and every reason which once confined my esteem for him to my own bosom, dying with him, I mourned as for a darling brother; and thus perpetuated the secret hatred of his widow, who, weak woman, envied me even the melancholy privilege of bewailing him.

“ Anxiety for the fate of Lord Leicester, which this event must necessarily excite, too soon gave way to a still nearer care: In vain I imputed my continual indispositions to grief: time confirmed an apprehension which had frequently alarmed me immediately after my Lord’s departure. I found but too plainly, that imprudent love had produced a new misfortune, and that I bore about a living testimony of my marriage, from which the worst consequences might arise.

“ Ah, unhappy babe, thy mother’s anguish foreran thy birth! Deprived by a sad combination of circumstances of a welcome, throbs of terror were thy first symptoms of existence. This accumulation of misfortune seemed to benumb my reason. I knew not what to resolve on. I saw myself almost in my royal mother’s melancholy predicament when I was born. “ Alas, perhaps I may to-morrow be entirely so, I would cry to myself; let me fly then while yet my prison gates are open.”

—The eye of Elizabeth became yet more

dreadful to me; I fancied every moment it dived into my heart, and death for ever seemed to surround me in forms yet dearer to me than my own.

My sister's better sense easily discerned how dangerous and how vain a project flight must prove. " You, she would say, whose timid heart shrinks even from those it loves: who have hitherto trod the most safe and confined circle; who hardly know what loneliness means; how, in this situation, can you encounter the perils of the road, the insolence of strangers, the dangers of the sea, and the terrors of a camp? Even admitting all these happily past, in following Lord Leicester, you only change the object of Elizabeth's resentment; from which, distance may not shield either you or your Lord.—Oh, by how many ways may she revenge herself!—Leicester it is true loves you; but in you, at present, are centred future distinction, pomp, and a variety of pleasures never yet indifferent to him:—these will be the least of his losses; and, believe

lieve me, if the secret transpires, that it is his own way will one day prove your dearest consolation: — and, surely, my dear Matilda will not entirely forget a sister, whose only joy or sorrow she yet has been."

The last tender consideration entirely subdued a spark of displeasure excited by the former. I submitted my wavering resolutions to her direction, and wrote an anonymous letter, descriptive of my situation, which, with innumerable charges, Lady Arundell delivered to Lord Brook, the distinguished friend of Sir Philip Sydney, to convey into Lord Leicester's own hands. That amiable woman became the confidant of my present fear, and with unwearied kindness conjured me to rely upon her conduct — in her house she assured me of an asylum, and in herself of another mother for the unfortunate infant. I felt all the indulgence of heaven in providing me such an unexpected resource; and almost wished I had not made my Lord a partaker in cares, he was so little

able to relieve. By her advice I summoned courage to appear again in the Court. "We seldom, said the prudent Lady Arundell, criticise those we see every day; novelty alone attracts curiosity; and if you are absent any time, some eye of the many your return will attract, may pierce through every veil into the cause. I will carefully watch, and when necessary, warn you to retreat."

I found on my return, the fair Rose Cecil had quitted London by the command of her father, who was highly incensed, alike at her refusal of a very advantageous match, and the passion that caused it. The loss of her society, which at another time I should have lamented, became an advantage in the present delicate conjuncture. I no longer durst wish for companions I could not keep at a distance; and I hoped ere we met again I should be more at liberty to cultivate the attachment she professed to me, while time would have conquered that unfortunate one which alone could interfere with it.

I counted

I counted the moments ere a letter could arrive from my Lord—in vain Ellinor assured me the time was insufficient, had Lord Brook's journey met with no delay. We were talking this over one morning, when a loud knocking at the door much earlier than usual, startled us both; how was I amazed a moment after to see my Lord rush in, booted, and with that disordered dress and air which shewed him just arrived! Pale and speechless, I threw myself into his arms, and made no other return to his embraces than by sighs and tears, while Ellinor, struck with the singularity of his conduct, repeatedly demanded how he came there?—“To see, to save my love, cried he, fixing his eyes on mine with unutterable fondness; will not my Matilda bless me with another self? and could I be such a savage to leave her to face the pain, the grief, the danger alone? Dry your tears, my most beloved, am not I with you? I, whom you have made the happiest of mankind; I, who was born but to wor-

ship you?"—"Imprudent! cried I, striking my own bosom—alas, my love, how is it I see you here?" It seemed as if reason, like light, pierced at once through the chaos of his mind. Absorbed in the single consideration of my situation, he had posted to England without resting a moment on the receipt of my letter, nor could find a cause might satisfy even indifferent observers, much more the jealous soul of Elizabeth.—"Ah, heavens! we are now indeed ruined, cried I, wringing my hands, the implacable enemy of my peace will become so of yours, and every malicious eye will now be fixed on her who sinks under the most casual observation.—Oh that the silent mansion in which I so long vegetated had been my grave, since I quitted it but to become a misfortune to the man I love?"—"Why will my Matilda, returned Lord Leicester, with a noble mildness, monopolize love and generosity? Perhaps I have yet sufficient influence over Elizabeth, to persuade her, fears for her welfare alone brought

brought me home; but even if not, shall I refuse to bear a single mortification for her sake who has borne so many for mine?--- The worst she can discover is our marriage; your birth is beyond the power of malice. Summon your fortitude, my love, and let us concert every measure necessary to our mutual safety, for I will take all the care of myself you would wish me. Never more, I solemnly swear, will you husband leave you. Dreams of fortune and favor fade away before the realities of life; let us, with our darling sister, seek a shelter in France; I want not the means of affluence, independent of the Queen. Let us then avow our union, and thus convert my dear Matilda's tenderness, always her first charm, alike into her virtue and her happiness. There, safe from the vengeance of Elizabeth, we may, without fear or dishonor, quietly await her dissolution. Imagine, my love, the exquisite transport of encircling the Throne of your mother with lovely pledges of our union; so while empire fills every power of her imagination,

tion, nature may throb through every pulse to her heart."

The fond, fond vision floated alike through my brain! Lord Leicester, indifferent to the opinion of the Queen, resolved to wait on her without entering into the reasons of his return, which was already known through the Court. Elizabeth had for some time kept her chamber, nevertheless she permitted him an audience ere she left her bed. I knew her capricious temper, and while meditating what line she meant to pursue, several of her ladies then in waiting came out of her chamber; the last of whom told me it was her pleasure, that I alone should witness her conversation with Lord Leicester. Conscience shivered my whole frame, and I entered the apartment as a condemned wretch would that where the rack was preparing. Lord Leicester, equally surprized, pointed out by an expressive glance a place where the closed curtain would prevent her remarking the changes of my countenance; and thither,

more

more dead than alive, I took my station; “Leicester, said she, in a languishing voice, thy unexpected return upon the news of my indisposition, is a fresh mark of thy watchful duty and unwearied affection. I have long resisted that tender inclination which distinguished thee in earliest youth; but now, when I have no potent enemy to fear, I may crown thy passion and indulge my own, without endangering myself or the state.---A new plot I have discovered to release Mary, renders it absolutely necessary I should, by marrying, cut off her hopes and those of her party; I shall now, in turn, surprise them. Long have I weighed the business in my mind, and frequently determined to recall thee; but thy unexpected return, by evincing the strength of thy tenderness, demands an immediate recompence.---Take then at last the so-long-withheld hand of Elizabeth, who thus resigns all authority over thee, except that thy heart gives her” She paused, extending a withered hand. Lord Leicester,

Leicester; confused beyond all expression, and expecting me to drop senseless every moment, hesitated a few broken sentences of faint gratitude, and kissed the fatal hand she no longer drew from him, fixing a moment after his eyes on me; and oh, how comprehensive was the look! — “ I perceive by thy trembling, my Lord, continued she, how much I have surprized thee. Recover thyself. — My election of thee is expected by every one, and shall be immediate to mortify Mary. I find myself well enough to quit my chamber; it is my intention thou shouldest lead me hence this evening, and, by taking a regal seat under the same canopy, prepare the kingdom for the declaration I purpose making to-morrow. The ceremony of espousal will demand time and splendor, but never more shalt thou quit her, who finds, after trying every effort, it is impossible to live without thee.”

There are instances in nature of timid beings whom darkness merely would deprive of their senses, who yet, on desperate

rate emergencies, encounter the jarring elements without shrinking.—I, who had till that moment been composed of tears and trembling, now found I must no longer hang a helpless weight on the heart of my husband, and blessing the caprice which made her select me as the only witness of her dotage, I leant against the tapestry, and endeavoured, by a self-collected air, to arm him for the occasion. I had the misery to see his fortitude diminish in proportion as mine increased, and that after struggling with his feelings till almost convulsed, he was obliged to quit the presence of the Queen precipitately, and scarcely could his failing limbs convey him thence. The attendants, before dismissed, now entering, the Queen called the Lady Latimer to her bedside, and I followed the footsteps of my Lord.—Heavens and earth, cried I, on looking round in vain for him, what is now to become of me! Even Ellinor, my only comfort, fate had cruelly robbed me of, nor was she to be found throughout the

whole

whole palace. Ere the tumults of my mind could subside into recollection, I was informed Lady Arundell's barge waited to convey me to Chelsea, where she was greatly indisposed. Easily imagining this was a feint of Lord Leicester's, to unfold his sentiments to me in safety, I hastened into it, and was conveyed to the fatal saloon on the banks of the Thames, once consecrated to love and pleasure only. I found Lord Leicester alone with his niece, measuring the apartment with unequal steps and a distracted air; he took my hand, and softening with pity for my situation, led me to a seat, and threw himself by me. His tears bedewed the hand he kissed. — “ Support yourself still, my soul, said he, the crisis is come unawares; and fate is beforehand with our intentions. Elizabeth indeed has surprized me, but as her passion, however weak and absurd, is generous, it now stabs me to the heart.— To suffer her to publish it to the world, to stamp with ridicule my Sovereign, my benefactress, would no doubt awake her

most

most mortal hatred, and rob me of my own esteem.—Matilda, my love, can you support the truth, and all the truth?—Did I not tell you that, one day or another, your anxious wish of seeing your mother free might interfere with your own happiness? It has indeed; for even at the moment the Queen in tender confidence imparted to me a plot to release Mary, she meant to obviate by her own marriage, my secret soul upbraided me as an abettor, if not a principal in that plot.—Happy in the idea of surprising you with its event, and far from expecting so extraordinary a one on the part of the Queen, I find by papers Lord Burleigh gave me ere I entered her apartment, that the enthusiastic assistants of Mary premeditated the martyrdom of Elizabeth, and have reason to imagine, that she by this time knows the man whom she was willing to level with herself, has been capable of so infamous a concealment. Nay, how do I know how far I may be included in the barbarity? She may be led to believe, the hand to which she gave her own an hour ago,

ago, was armed with a dagger, and ready every moment to use it. --- My life is at stake, and oh ! what is infinitely dearer, every virtue which once I hoped would long survive me, cancelled by ingratitude." --- The agitations of his mind almost deprived him of his senses. --- I threw myself at his feet. --- " Oh ! if ever the unfortunate Matilda was dear to you, cried I, ~~now~~ shew it — now struggle to endure for her --- has she ever feared to do so for you ? It is in vain to hope any thing from Elizabeth, as circumstances appear she must condemn you. --- Already I see you in the Tower --- I see those gates open to receive you, that have entombed so many alike noble and innocent. If you would have the babe its mother's anguish almost urges into a premature existence --- oh ! if you would have it see the light of heaven, plunge her no farther in despair. --- Fly now, ~~now~~, this very moment while we have yet the power. While you live your innocence may yet be vindicated ; and while you live I may, perhaps be able to do so."

Lord

Lord Leicester, shaking his head, gave a deep sigh --- a sigh more soul-piercing than the most violent agitation. --- " You know not what you say, my love, returned he --- even now, in all probability, my house is surrounded, and expresses dispatched to close every port in the kingdom, should I attempt to leave it ; and hardly is there a rustic in England to whom my features are unknown. One expedient alone remains, and greatly would that soften the stroke. You are neither exposed to my danger, nor like me the marked of every eye --- flight is still in your power, and in you I shall still think myself safe --- put yourself under the protection." --- " Never, cried I, starting up with vehemence ; I am your wife, that holy title I will maintain before men and angels, and nothing --- nothing I in turn solemnly swear shall part us. I will, with watchful duty, share the prison to which I shall always remember I have condemned you ; and oh ! if your fate is accelerated by my means, be assured I alike will share your grave." — " One hope

hope of safety is yet yours, cried Lady Arundell. How could it escape you that the Recess may still supply a sad and dear asylum till we can judge of circumstances?"---The thought had indeed occurred to me, but I dared not name the memorial of the present misfortune. I examined his eyes in silence. " My gentle love, my sweet Matilda, can I resolve to grieve thee, sighed he, speak, would you wish me to conduct you thither?" My tears only allowed me to pronounce, " yes." " Yet how, resumed he, is it possible? --- How can you support the inevitable fatigues of the journey, with the addition of its fears in your present situation?" " I can support any thing, every thing, sobbed I inarticulately, but the idea of your danger." " Yes, my love, added he, kissing away my tears, I will, if possible, live to reward your unexampled tenderness. Lady Arundell think for us, suggest the mode of our departure." " It should be sudden, cried our generous friend, and how can either be sufficiently disguised, or how shall

shall we find proper attendants." " We will have none with us, returned Lord Leicester, I rely on your care to summon Le Val from Kenilworth Castle ; he is master of the secret of the Recess, whither he can follow us, and convey with ease, at different times, the treasure hoarded in the Castle ; while with the venerable foster-father of my love, we wait your farther informations." — " Ah, how happy was it, added I, your fondness obliged me to ride ! now can I follow you fearless of any thing but Elizabeth. Supply me, dear Lady Arundell, with the homely garb of a servant ; my Lord must have recourse to the disguise of a painter, invented and worn on a happier occasion, yet if even I hardly knew him in it, who else shall discover him ? Oh, haste my darling friend ! secure us the fleetest horses — I seem every moment environed with the guards of Elizabeth — when shall we be any thing but a trouble to you ? "

The amiable Lady Arundell provided all in the manner required, and we set

off immediately. Ere sun-set we reached a peasant's cot near St. Alban's, where my Lord insisted we might with safety take a little rest, which indeed I greatly required. Accustomed to pass and repass that road for ever, he fancied he remembered every face he saw, and I too surely thought all remembered him. Our rustic host and his wife seemed to have just understanding enough to connect the idea of mystery with us, and I roused my Lord ere break of day, secretly resolving no more to enter any house till we reached our asylum. Even the profuse recompence my Lord bestowed on the peasants, rather according with his soul than his appearance, excited their suspicions; they pressed us to stay in a manner which pointed mine, and we departed with a precipitation which I dare say confirmed theirs: pursuing our journey by roads little frequented, Lord Leicester being perfectly acquainted with the ground. I went through incredible fatigues without complaint; riding the whole day with no other

other refreshment than a draught of new milk, supplied by a girl as we passed along; till as the sun was declining, we reached a brow which commanded St. Vincent's Abbey. At the well known prospect my heart dilated — my eyes wandered over the whole with sensations our first home only can excite. — Nature seemed to tinge the woods with deeper verdure — the translucent stream meandered in majestic silence, undisturbed by noisy barge-men. — Innocence seemed to rest under the shade of the willows which every where fringed its margin, and the empurpled sun diffused the repose he seemed hastening to partake — an invincible charm took possession of my heart, and even the sense of misfortune was for the moment suspended.

"Here, cried I, checking my horse, here we shall be safe --- ah, more than safe, here we may be happy! --- Why, why cannot those hours return when first we met? those hours of undescribable felicity? --- This landscape then bounded

our wishes ; in its narrow circle is contained all necessary to existence, in ourselves all essential to happiness : but society, that first of blessings, brings with it evils death only can cure. " And the venerable Father Anthony, with what joy---ah ! with what sorrow will he receive us --- forewarned even by our presence of affliction, he will hardly dare to indulge the rapture of a moment." --- Every sentiment and sensation mingling thus in my mind filled the interval ere we arrived at the spot, where my heart recognized the minutest object. Alighting at some distance, Lord Leicester fastened the horses in an obscure part of the wood, and we proceeded on foot to the hermit's cave. Evening began now to gloom over the hemisphere. - - I had before agreed not to open my lips, till my Lord had by degrees revealed himself to Father Anthony, whose enfeebled senses might not be able to resist the surprise ; but how did that return upon ourselves, when a voice with which we

were

were unacquainted replied to us without opening the door! Heart-struck, I caught the arm of Lord Leicester, who eagerly enquired after the hermit. “ He has been dead these ten days, returned the man, and is interred among the Scroope family in the vault of St. Vincent’s Abbey: I am placed here to protect the few effects he left behind, till his relations shall direct what is to be done with them.” --- “ And thus vanish our hopes of safety, peace, and pleasure, sighed I, turning disconsolately from the cave. Oh, sainted Anthony, I have now no tears for thee, and that loss I should lately have shed floods for, is now heard with indifference. Where, wretched wanderers as we are, where now can we betake ourselves? Had we staid in London, friendship, nay interest, might have sheltered us; here I am as well known as you are there, and the possessors of St. Vincent’s Abbey will infallibly discover both. Nay we know not who those are, and whether we might not throw ourselves into the

power

power of our worst enemies. Alas, my love, what do you suffer for my sake ! it is in vain to affect strength ; nature fails, and I must rest if only on the damp earth."

---" Gracious God ! exclaimed Lord Leicester, supporting me in his arms, how have we deserved this accumulation of evils ? Let us wind through the wood ; who knows, my Matilda, but providence has left the gate of the tomb open to shelter us ? It is plain, the peasant who inhabits the cave is not acquainted with the secrets of father Anthony, and in all probability that of the Recess died with him. Oh ! struggle a little, but a little, my love, something bids me believe Heaven will yet protect us."

Though faint between want of nourishment and excessive fatigue, I yet strove to follow my Lord, but did it so slowly, that night entirely involved us ere we reached the tomb. Long custom, however, enabled me to lead him aright.---" It is open, cried he, in a transport of joy, come, my love, and let me assist you to enter." ---He did

did so, but hardly was I within it, ere I found myself violently seized by several persons, who instantly deprived me of the power of utterance had heaven allowed it, but agony and horror so entirely overcame me, that I sunk senseless in their arms.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

